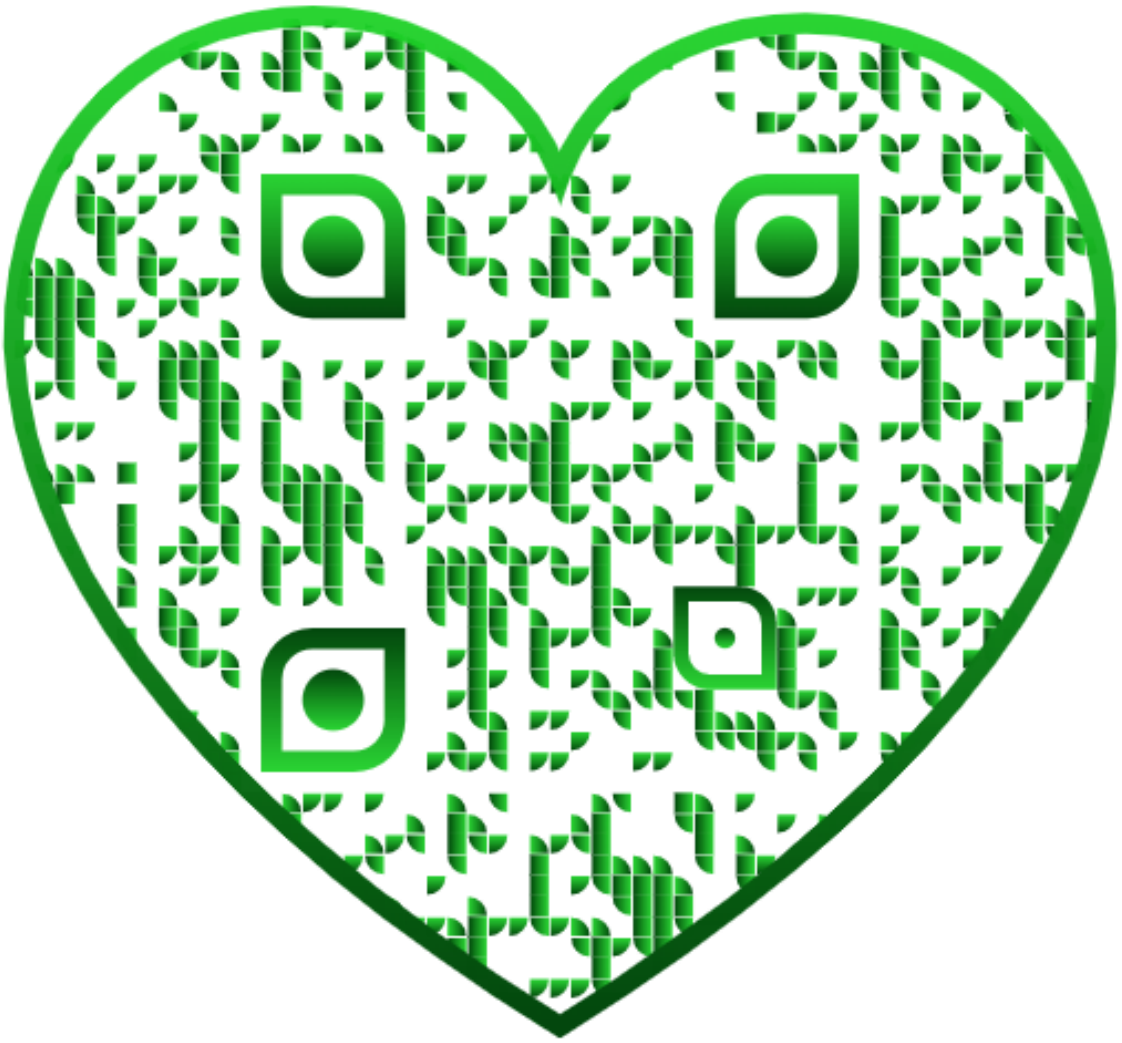
hidden experience

ten years of blogging
2009 – 2019

a personal journey of
owls, synchronicity
and UFO contact

Mike Clelland
author of The Messengers

foreword by Red Pill Junkie



Hidden Experience

collected writings from ten years of blogging
2009 - 2019

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a personal journey of
owls, synchronicity and UFO contact

by Mike Clelland

FOREWORD

By Red Pill Junkie

It's a question you occasionally stumble upon when you read an article about UFOs published by some mainstream media outlet: "Oh where have all the alien abductees gone?" You know, the same news sites that also love to comment from time to time on the 'steady decline' of UFO sightings? Only with the phenomenon currently known as alien abduction the cynicism is even more blatant, because at best popular culture regards it as a 90s fad promoted by the X-Files which the public eventually grew tired of—the same way rollerblades and Tamagotchi pets became passé—and at worst it's still associated with crass proctological jokes thanks to the irreverent humor of Matt Stone and Trey Parker.

But truth be told, answering that question is rather easy: the abductees didn't go anywhere, they simply discovered the power of the internet and started blogging. A path that hid them from the judgmental eyes of a public who never really made an effort to make sense of their claims or empathize with their anguish, from skeptics who accused them of lying and being nothing but attention seekers, and from psychiatrists who sought only to interpret their claims merely from a pathological perspective. In an age that has witnessed significant advancements in accepting the rights of the LGBT community, the people who claim to have had close encounters of the fourth kind seem to be locked inside the ultimate cultural closet—as an aside, it's also interesting to notice certain parallels in the search for identity of both groups, like the infighting concerning the 'correct' use of terms and pronouns, e.g. *experiencer* vs *abductee* vs *contactee.*

Blogging also freed abductees (or experiencers, whatever floats your saucer) from the need of sharing their stories with some intermediary in order to reach a larger audience. I am of the opinion that these biased middlemen, be that a UFO investigator or a TV producer, are often more interested in trying to pigeonhole witnesses' brushes with the Other in a way that validates a specific interpretation or make the cases more palatable to orthodox Science, which ultimately implies leaving on the cutting floor a treasure trove of important material often referred to as 'high strangeness'; a whitewashing

strategy that was heavily opposed by the late researcher Karla Turner, who thought it is precisely in the ‘absurdity’ of high strangeness that we could start perceiving a method to the madness.

It bears mentioning that focusing on the things that refuse to align with our neat little models of the Universe is the most effective—though not necessarily the easiest—way to elicit a true paradigm change. In the history of Science we find the example of Johannes Kepler, who was only able to establish the elliptical orbits of the planets after begrudgingly heeding Tycho Brahe’s advice to pay special attention in the retrograde motion of Mars. In doing so he was forced to throw away his entire initial theory (Ouch!), but ended up birthing modern astronomy as we currently know it (Yay!).

It is this taboo material of high strangeness, only shared in hushed tones among trusted friends or fellow experiencers behind closed doors, that Mike Clelland was compelled to deep dive into with his blog ten years ago, not even knowing if he would ever strike bottom—or hold his breath long enough.

I’m not exactly sure when I started following *Hidden Experience*, but I know exactly how I became one of its regular followers: Greg Bishop, who is one of my best friends and mentors in the UFO field, wrote about Mike on the now defunct website *UFO Mystic*, where he was one of the contributors along with Nick Redfern. Greg was very close to the late Mac Tonnies—who serendipitously found Mike’s journal entries almost from the beginning, so it’s easy to conclude Mac was the one who enthusiastically advised Greg to check out this new blog. Greg recently told me that he liked Mike’s content from the start, because it was “firmly in the Strieber tradition.”

As an avid reader and commenter in UFO Mystic and other paranormal sites, I followed Greg’s recommendation to visit *Hidden Experience*, and found out he was right: Mike was following Whitley Strieber’s mantra of ‘living with the uncertainty’ of what had happened to him, and refusing to simply accept the narratives imposed by investigators like Budd Hopkins and David Jacobs.

I confess—Mike’s strict agnosticism towards his own story was at times frustrating, and I’m sure I’m not the only online reader who fantasized about giving that big, bald head of his a good slap while yelling, “Snap out of it and just admit it already!”

I guess the Universe did the same in the end, using owls instead—yet in

retrospect I'm so ever thankful he soldiered on with his approach, and also that to this day he still finds the terms 'abductee' and 'experiencer' as incapable to fully encapsulate the totality of what he's been going through, as a glass of water is an ill-suited representation of the ocean.

But there was also something else, which I still can't put my finger on, that made Mike's stories so compelling to me on a personal level. Perhaps it was the way the disarming honesty about his own doubts, and the willing to share his life with such openness on a public space to the point that 'hidden experience' almost seemed like an oxymoron, because this dude was laying it ALL exposed. Major *cojones*, señor!—or perhaps because the central theme behind his blog posts wasn't really UFOs but synchronicities, and at the time I was starting to pay attention to the magical coincidences manifesting into my own life, which even seemed to have also been boosted by my increasing immersion into cyberspace.

Indeed, if the ancestral I-Ching should be better understood as an "uncertainty engine" rather than a divinatory system, as was proposed by philosopher Will Buckingham on an Aeon essay published in 2013, then perhaps the World Wide Web should also be perceived as a living 'synchronicity engine' rather than an electronic communications network; an acknowledgment that would resonate with Dr. Jacques Vallee's theories that ours is an associative Universe governed by consciousness and information, rather than a causative one governed by reductionist physics.

Or maybe it was simply because Mike wasn't pretending to have the answers to life, the universe and everything, but merely chronicling his bizarre memories as faithfully as was humanly possible, offering an honest lens into the life of a person who was going through events that seemed masterfully designed to challenge his concept of reality —in ways that were as both subtle as they were confounding—without claiming to have any sort of guidance to anyone who might be going through the same ordeal as he was, other than opening yourself completely to the mystery: the 'anti-guru', if you will. Certainly a breath of fresh air in a field in which looking for a leader is a big temptation (right, Dr. Steven?).

Whatever the case, I was hooked on *Hidden Experience*, baby! I checked on the blog every day to see if there were any updates (RSS was for N00bs), and to also comment and read the feedback left by other people—ah… the good ole days before Facebook killed the blog star. Turns out I wasn't the

only one who felt mysteriously drawn to Mike's serialized saga, and the small flock of readers (see what I did there) eventually turned into legion after the Google oracle associated *Hidden Experience* as the go-to place to find "UFOs" + "Owls".

With Mike's inclusion of wonderful artwork and maps to illustrate his posts, it sometimes felt as if we were taking part of a virtual 4D session of Dungeons & Dragons, and were all desperately trying to keep the paladin Sir Clelland safe from the claws of the demogorgon on his quest for the Grail—and yeah, sometimes we wanted to shove him into that creepy dark cave to see once and for all what was lurking inside.

Seriously though, what I really think was going on is that Mike's intention of using his online journal as a self therapy tool was not only spot on, but was also working on us the readers as well. Hermeneutics is the branch of philosophy dealing with finding the 'hidden' meaning of things (the word itself is derived from Hermes, Greek god of secrets and expensive ties) and in the book *The Super Natural*, co-written with Whitley Strieber, professor Jeffrey Kripal argues that the very act of interpreting a hidden symbol—say, an owl or a UFO—transforms the interpreter itself. The cypher becomes the catalyst. You see, if Carl Jung were alive today, I honestly believe that he too would have resorted to blogging instead of creating that mammoth illuminated manuscript called *The Red Book* to deal with his personal mental and spiritual crisis, because in the end that it's probably what this is all about.

And just like I agree with Mike that synchronicities are the Universe's method to make you stop and pay attention, I also suspect that when it comes to the paranormal nothing—NOTHING—occurs by mere chance. By that I mean you should probably ponder on the possibility that it's no accident you happen to have this ebook on the electronic gadget of your choice right now, dear reader—listen, was that an owl that just hooted near your window right this moment?

Any psychology undergrad is familiar with Abraham Maslow's pyramid of human motivation, which shows the primal 'physiological' needs at the base, and climbs up until it apexes with 'self-actualization' and the person's need to realize their own potential. What few people know is that not long before he died Maslow revised his diagram, and on top of 'self-actualization' he included 'self-transcendence'.

Writing about it for the website Big Think, Robbie Berman explains that

we can understand that final developmental step as the need “to see ourselves as part of a bigger universe, to develop the common priorities that can allow humankind to survive as a species.”

We could also use a less pompous term and simply understand it as having a “sense of a mission,” just like Mike and others like him claim; in which case even someone who may be on the fence about his story could still see the positive benefits of his ongoing introspective examination.

Or maybe the urgency Mike felt when he started to type on his computer screen as a spur of the moment in March of 2009 had some deeper, ulterior motive that we are yet to fathom; in which case I’m only 73% joking when I say I hope that by writing this foreword Mike can put up a good word for me when the mothership lands.

Red Pill Junkie
Mexico City, March 2019

INTRODUCTION

We must be willing to let go of the life we planned so as to have the life that is waiting for us.

—Joseph Campbell

I wrote about the most difficult time of my life as it was happening, and posted it on a blog.

I just reread that sentence, and I'm astonished I could do something so bold, but I did. I'd been confronted with a chain of strange events that seemed impossible to understand. I tried my best to dismiss what was happening, but that became increasingly difficult. All the clues pointed to one thing, and I was forced to ask myself, "Am I a UFO abductee?"

My blog was started ten years ago as an attempt to answer that question. I was 46 years old, and had come face to face with something that seemed to want to break me. I was lost in fear, doubt, insecurity, tension and disbelief. Yet at the same time, the power of these events left me in awe. There was a kind of shining wonder mixed in with all the overlapping stresses.

The birth of the blog came at a chaotic time in my life. I was drowning in synchronicities, and they all seemed connected to either UFOs or owls. Trying to process my emotions meant obsessive journaling. Facing up to that kind of self-inquiry rips away a lot of assumptions, not just about who I am, but the meaning of reality itself.

My fears and emotions were unloaded into the blog, and what emerged was a sort of public diary. It was also my therapy.

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I thought about writing a proper memoir and simply using the blog as reference, but there is such a mood of immediacy in these posts. Many were written not as a reminiscence—they were written in the moment, and the

urgency is palpable. It would be fair to say I went a little bit mad in the early years of the blog, and that's not hidden in text, it's right on the surface.

As I write this, there are 848 posts on my blog. Creating this book meant going back and carefully rereading my journey, yet the site itself had its own journey. I wrote a lot, but I also did over ninety podcasts in a five year period, and I'm tremendously proud of those interviews.

The podcasts ended when I began the first owl book. That project was monumental and needed my complete dedication. After that came a second book. I was still posting during these years, but the tenor had changed—my energy was pouring into the books.

Some blog posts came in a rapid fire outburst, like the series about the lines on the map and Byron, North Dakota. Reading each post in order isn't easy—my mind was jumping around, and it's evident in the frantic mood of the text. For this book, I did my best to streamline the narrative so it plays out as a story, yet keeps the anxious vibe of the original writings.

The flow of the blog could get a bit scattered, it was easy to jump around and post diverse items. If I had a new thought or a funny little story, I'd write it up. If it was simple I'd keep it short. But if something seemed important I'd work to explore it from every angle, and this jumbled mix of ideas shows up in the book.

There's a sense of immediacy in blogging, an implicit kind of pressure to write fast and click the button that puts the post online. I gave myself over to that urgency, and consequently some of the writing was sort of sloppy. Right from the onset, I'd go back in and rework the text of published posts. I've been cleaning up typos and clarifying my thoughts right from day one. If something new came up having to do with one of the stories, I'd go back in and add more. Sometimes these addendums ended up longer than the initial post.

I've been endlessly tinkering with the content, so it seemed fine to edit the posts for this book. I used a lot of all caps and italic text in my writing, especially in the early years. It was a bit much and most of it was cleaned up, but not all. It felt important to keep the flavor of the blog.

The blog is crammed with hyperlinks, and it was tempting to do the same with this ebook, but trying to match the online content would be overkill. Same with pictures; they work great in a blog format, but would be distracting here.

Some of the stories in this book overlap with *The Messengers*. A lot of my personal experiences were pared down for that book, and many of those stories are told in a more complete form here.

Red Pill Junkie wrote the foreword for this book. He's been a dedicated reader right from the very beginning, commenting on the posts with wit and insight. There was a point early on when I included a short anecdote in a post from a UFO book, and I wrote it in a way that made it seem like I'd read the book—which I hadn't. RPJ was quick to comment that I got the account wrong, and he was stern about it. I went back in and revised the inaccurate sentence. He taught me an important lesson, people were taking my blog seriously. Someone out there was diligently reading my stuff, and wasn't gonna let me slide on things like the facts. I upped my game because I knew he'd call me out on any slacking, and I've been grateful for his vigilant eye.

I'm writing this in 2019, and I've watched the online world shift to shorter zippier formats like Instagram and Twitter. It feels the era of the blog has ended, or at least it's changed—and so have I.

Creating this book meant reliving a powerful chapter of my life. Some of it was scary and terribly confusing, yet I'm grateful. There's a haunting drama to what I've endured, and it tells a deeper story. Life is a journey, and I got lost while searching along its strange winding path. Maybe I'm still lost, but I'm doing my best to keep pressing on.

Mike Clelland
March 2019

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THE FIRST MONTH

I shouldn't precisely have chosen madness if there had been any choice, but once such a thing has taken hold of you, you can't very well get out of it.

— Vincent Van Gogh

In the moment before a tea kettle boils, there's a sort of tension as the steam builds up. It might appear calm, but something's about to happen. This is how my life felt starting around 2006. I'd been long avoiding a lot of strange memories, but this wasn't working anymore. There was going to be a day when I'd need to deal with this stuff, but I was gritting my teeth and trying to deny it. The universe had its own plan, and the kettle was about to whistle.

In 2009 I went to a UFO conference in Laughlin, Nevada. One of the speakers was a woman named Miriam Delicado, and I'd read her book. I was waiting for coffee on the first day of the week-long event, and she was next to me in line. I introduced myself, and asked if we could talk at some point during the conference.

She's one of the very few people in this field I can honestly refer to as a contactee. A few days later we sat together in a tacky casino buffet, and I told her a lot of disturbing memories were welling up and I didn't know what to do with them. I was also having so many synchronicities that it scared me. Something was happening, and whatever it was, it challenged everything. I used the term "dark night of the soul" to describe what I'd been going through, and that seems accurate.

After awkwardly trying to explain my life, I asked her, "What do I do? How do I proceed forward?"

Miriam was silent, and I could tell she took my question very seriously.

After a long, thoughtful pause she said, “You should talk about this more.”

It was about a fifteen hour drive from the conference back home to my cabin in Idaho. I pulled into my driveway, walked into the house, sat down at the computer, went online and started a blog—I don’t think I even took off my coat.

When you create a blog, you need to fill in a little box with a name. I hadn’t thought about this, so I typed in a couple of things but they were already in use. After a few tries, I typed: *Hidden Experience,* and it was done. I wasn’t happy with the name, but was too impatient to think of anything better. In the years that followed, I’ve been impressed at how well the name reflects the questions and mysteries within my research.

My initial vision of the blog wasn’t much beyond a site to share some of my synchronicities. I’ve had a lot of them, and they make for nice posts. They’re short and end with a tidy punchline, so I started posting those.

The source of inspiration is elusive. I’ve done art and illustration work my entire life, so I should have some awareness of where this kind of creative motivation comes from, but I don’t. The blog had a weird urgency to it, and I’m not exaggerating—it felt like I was compelled by something outside myself.

Midway through that first month, I started posting some of my memories of what could be interpreted as alien contact. This wasn’t easy, and I would’ve never whispered a word if it hadn’t been for a momentous synchronicity. Sharing my experiences online was an act of abandonment.

2009 was a sort of tipping point, both in my life and the evolution of the internet. It was right around that time when starting a blog had become pretty easy; a few years earlier it would have been intimidating, and a few years later everyone had a blog. I certainly wasn’t on the ground floor of this cyber revolution, but I was there pretty early on.

The first 30 days of my blog seem remarkable; the themes and ideas in those initial posts have continued for a decade. They embodied a challenge to myself, a resolution to be as honest as I could, and that wasn’t easy.

I’d walked up to a line and crossed it. This was a kind of surrender—it meant letting go of self-imposed judgments, and falling into the hidden parts of myself. This was my own deepest soul-searching, and I did it in a public forum.

The kettle was boiling, and I didn’t know how to turn it off.

Cat and String

Tuesday, March 3, 2009

my cat Spazzy

The term UFO implies a lot, and by definition it's unknown. How can I wrap my head around something so utterly strange, something that no matter how you look at it, remains unknowable?

Here's something that helps me. I use a piece of string when I play with my cat, I stand in the kitchen and wiggle it around, and my cat just goes nuts. I never really let her "catch" the string, I try and keep it just an inch in front of her. Sometimes she'll manage to get it in her claws, but I'll snap it away and out of reach.

Does she think the string is alive?

I can't help but think this is exactly what's happening to us. To me, this phenomena is similar to that piece of string. It wiggles out in front of us, but it's simply impossible to catch. Does my cat have a way to perceive the string as a string? Maybe, but she doesn't seem to be that insightful—her reality is that it's a wonderful and special living thing that magically amplifies her very being. The string game can get so overwhelming that she becomes positively unhinged with excitement.

The experiences described by the abductees may be impossible to accurately perceive. This bizarre experience is, like the string, capable of overwhelming and unhinging.

Do we say that the UFO occupants are visiting us in the same way my cat would say the string is alive?

One thing that draws me to this subject is that, at its core, it's such an intensely wonderful and scary story. I used to love spooky campfire stories as a child, and now as an adult, I still crave that mysterious thrill, and the UFO phenomena fulfills that need. Is there something universal about our need for a scary story? Do "they" know about that need, and frame the experience in a way that will satisfy us on some deeper level?

These stories are so elusive. We want to be able to "kick the tires" of this experience, but it just doesn't happen. As soon as we get close to a clue or answer, it has a way of skittering out of our reach, like the string on my kitchen floor.

My cat needs to play the string game to truly fulfill her "cat-ness." Do we need the experience of trying to confront an elusive mystery to truly fulfill our "human-ness"? A pragmatic scientist would say no, but what would a primitive shaman say?

My cat and I are connected to each other when we play the string game. So then, what are *we* connected to?

Text added 2018:

This essay was the *very first* post on this blog, and my friend Mac Tonnies left the *very first* comment. He wrote: "Have you read my essay about cats and laser pointers? We're on the same page!"

He was right, we had both written essays about cats as a metaphor for our limitations in understanding UFOs. Our two essays reflect each other, and this mystery deepens later in this book in the chapter dedicated to him.

My cat essay was written on the morning of November 25, 2006, over two and a half years before the birth of this blog. I sat at my computer and with a strong cup of coffee and it sort of wrote itself. It's interesting that so much of how I presently attempt to frame these mysteries is expressed in this initial post. I described the mystery as "unknowable," and proceeded forward with that as my mindset. I mention campfire stories and shamans as a way to distance myself from the literal. I even say that I, "…crave that mysterious thrill, and the UFO phenomena fulfills that need." And that reads like a declaration of my subjective approach.

Angel on the uptown E-train

Tuesday, March 3, 2009

This is a story from over twenty years ago, and it still leaves me wondering. I was about 22 years old and living in New York City. It was a lovely summer morning, probably 1984 or ’85. I got on the subway in lower Manhattan to get to my office job uptown. This was the E train, and as usual I got on at Spring Street.

The next stop was West 4th Street, and when the doors opened a very pretty young woman got on the train.

I don’t understand why, but I literally thought she was an angel. I’m not kidding. I was convinced she was somehow delivering a mystical message. Maybe I died and she was escorting me to the great beyond—maybe this was the subway to heaven?

I was thunderstruck. It all felt extremely strange.

I can vividly recall exactly what she looked like and what she was wearing. She had short blond hair and was reading the New York Times (she folded the paper in the proper way that only the savvy New Yorker knows). She wore a simple white summer sun dress, clean white canvas “boat” shoes, no socks and her legs were un-shaven. She was smiling as she read the paper. She never sat down and stood with perfect posture. She never looked at me.

She got off at 34th street.

At the time I was living with my girlfriend Catherine, we shared a little apartment in SoHo. When I got home that evening, I told her about this weirdly profound event. Alas—I couldn’t convey how intense it was. She didn’t understand and got kind of angry at me, which was typical. She simply saw it as me ogling, and reacted defensively.

Now the story jumps ahead a few months to a busy street in Greenwich Village, just east of Astor Place. I was walking on the sidewalk with Catherine on a cold wintery Saturday morning. We had a rather tense relationship, and I clearly remember we were in the midst of a squabble, which was typical. She suddenly blurts out, “What are we doing? This isn’t working! We shouldn’t be together! I’m not your type!”

Then she points to a random woman on the sidewalk and says, “She’s your

type!”

And it was her—and she was wearing the same shoes!

Right then in that moment, I didn’t get any of the angelic shock like I’d gotten in the subway car. It was gray and blustery, and she had on a big green army coat. She was with a guy who had long hair and a beard, and I got a bad vibe from him. I remember thinking he was a manipulative creep—which is a funny impression from twenty plus years ago.

Text added in 2018:

In the last three decades I’ll occasionally tell this story, and everyone asks the same question: “Did you go up and talk to her?” I didn’t, it’s not the kind of thing you would do on a busy street in Manhattan.

Owls at sunset

Wednesday, March 4, 2009

I went camping for one night with a friend named Kristen. We were out in a beautiful area, sitting in a meadow on a big flat rock. It was early autumn and the sun was setting, and it was warm and calm. We talked as I prepared dinner on a small camp stove. It was that magic twilight time, and the moon was rising. Our conversation reached a point where we were opening up about our spiritual beliefs and insights.

Just then an owl swooped above us, only a few feet above our heads. It flew over us a few more times, each time passing low and close. We were both delighted to have this lovely sighting. Then there was another owl, and then a third!

All three were circling and swooping silently above us. It lasted for over an hour!

We set out our sleeping bags to sleep under the stars. As we lay there looking up at the night sky, the owls would swoop above our faces, blotting out the stars for a brief instant. Owls have specialized feathers so they are amazingly quiet, and this eerie silence made the entire experience all the more strange.

It was absolutely *magical.*

A little more about my friend. She is young and smart, and at that point we actually didn't know each other very well. We talked together on that flat rock, surrounded by wildflowers and mountains. There came a point in our conversation when I felt a really delightful connection. It was hugely life affirming. We were on exactly the same wavelength—and this was the moment the three owls appeared!

The next morning dawned calm and clear. We woke early and hiked a different route back to the car. The terrain was beautiful and we talked excitedly, marveling about the owls from the night before. In the final mile of the hike, we met an old girlfriend of mine on the trail, I'll call her Carol (a pseudonym). She was now married, and was walking with her young daughter and son. Ever since we split up there had been an awkward tension between us, especially since we both live in the same small town.

I picked up her son and carried him, and Kristen walked a little ahead of us on the trail while holding hands with her daughter. While we walked, Carol and I had the conversation I'd been waiting to have for over five years. It was calm and hugely reassuring. A short time later, Kristen and I said goodbye to Carol and her kids in the dusty parking lot. After we parted, Kristen excitedly told me that talking with Carol's daughter was the most important thing that has ever happened in her life. I couldn't quite grasp what she was saying, but there was something about the little girl that reminded Kristen of herself when she was that age.

Okay, there's more. Four days later, Kristen and I went out for another single night of camping, this time in a different area of the mountains. The sun was setting, and it was starting to feel chilly. I suggested we walk up to a nearby hilltop, both for the view and to warm up before going to sleep.

It was a short hike, maybe less than ten minutes. We got to the top of the gentle rounded hill, and had the exact same experience—*three owls appeared and stayed with us for over half an hour!*

This time they got *much* closer, swooping in low, close enough to touch. They watched us at eye level among nearby branches. These were beautiful short-eared owls, and one landed on the ground in front of us, probably less than ten feet away. It stood about a foot high, and calmly stared at us. I looked at Kristen, and she was wide-eyed with amazement. This may seem funny, but I think it was the same three owls. Just like before, the experience was perfectly magical!

After all my years of compulsively reading UFO literature, I was keenly aware of owls as a recurring screen memory within abduction reports. I recognized this might be a possibility, and was super focused on these three owls. I feel confident in declaring those were real owls.

Seeing three owls once was pretty neat, but having the same experience a few days later was positively bizarre.

In the days after this second event, Kristen and I searched the internet for stuff on spirit animals and mystical insights surrounding owls, and the results were curious. Two things kept coming up; one was that this is a sign to face your fears, and Kristen seemed to feel this was really important for her in her life.

The other was that owls are a sign to be patient. This felt important for me. Kristen was young, smart and lovely, and I was completely smitten by her.

I'm 18 years older, and that age difference created a lot of weirdness.

There could be no more perfect message from the great beyond than patience.

For me, the intensity of our owl experiences created a weird, emotional urgency. I saw the whole thing as terribly important, but couldn't figure out any meaning. I was getting swallowed up in a kind of fanatical madness, and that made everything between us really awkward.

Yet we were seeing each other almost every day. We were constantly emailing and phoning, much of this was an attempt to decipher any deeper meaning to those owls. Despite the tensions there was a real connection between us, and our time together was a swirling cloud of cryptic synchronicities. Kristen calls me a "kindred spirit," and that feels like an understatement. She left town about a month after we saw those owls, moving back to her hometown in Michigan.

Text added Dec. 2018:

On the surface, this is a simple story. I saw some owls while camping, *yet it changed the direction of my life*.

This account was initially written as a journal entry not long after it happened. It was on my computer when I started the blog, and I posted it even though it felt raw and sparse.

Over the years, I've tinkered with this post. I've gone in and revised little bits, fixed some awkward sentences and added more to the story. A revised version eventually became the first chapter of *The Messengers*, and I continually refer back to it as the opening salvo of the owl stuff in my life.

There's an aspect of these events that I didn't talk about at the time, but I am now. UFOs were part of the story, and this feels important. Here's a short excerpt from page 17 in *The Messengers*:

> The owl sightings with Kristen came in September of 2006, when I was 44 years old. This was *exactly* the point in my life when all those confusing experiences and their UFO implications were refusing to stay buried.
>
> These memories were in the forefront of my mind during both those weird owl episodes in the mountains with Kristen. Right in the moment as I was looking at those owls, there was an alarm in my head blaring, "*This is real! This has something to do with the UFOs!*" I was seeing owls, but my mind was screaming UFOs. The message I heard was clear—*you are a UFO abductee!* This connection might seem illogical, but all I can say is right then I felt a strong sense of knowing. It took great strength to put the lid on that voice in my head

> and hide it away. The problem was that the owl sightings continued and the pressure kept building.
>
> It was easy to ignore all my UFO experiences, I mean, those just seemed absurd. But I couldn't ignore what was happening with all the owls. When someone is deeply asleep, whispering won't wake them. Sometimes you have to really shake them. If that doesn't work, send in the owls.

I received an emphatic message in the presence of owls—I was told *I was a UFO abductee*. I certainly got the message, but I didn't want to believe it. The first four years of this blog were spent wrestling with denial, confusion, fear and awe. These emotions were not hidden between the lines—my struggles were right on the surface.

Neutrogena sunblock

Wednesday, March 4, 2009

I spend a lot of time in the mountains, and it takes its toll on my skin. My face can get red and irritated, and most sunblocks seem to make it worse. I've been on a long search for a sunblock that doesn't affect my sensitive skin.

I work at an outdoor school, and during an outing in 2007 I asked a handful of co-workers if they had any recommendations. Three of my comrades praised Neutrogena-45 in separate conversations. Hmmmmm—maybe this would be the stuff that would finally end my search?

So when I returned to my home town, I went to the little locally owned health food store in the hopes of finding a bottle of Neutrogena-45. Alas, nothing. And it wasn't at the little locally owned drug store either. I left the main street, and began my drive home. I planned to see if the giant grocery store built on the edge of town had this stuff. I slowed down as I approached the turn, but I couldn't quite turn the steering wheel, I simply couldn't. The grim strip-mall of creepiness just seemed to repel me. I continued home.

While driving I saw big bulging bags of garbage set along the highway leaving town. This was the weekend of the annual spring roadside trash clean up. Each year, an organized group of volunteers would pick up trash after the snow melts. I live right on the highway, and I usually tried to help out on those days. So when I got home, I grabbed a few big trash bags and went out along the roadside. It's actually pretty distressing to really see (and touch) a winters worth of trash. Lots of cheap beer cans, fast food wrappers and soggy cigarette butts.

I had some time, so I figured I'd walk north along the west side of the road and collect trash all the way to the next corner, about a half mile away. There was a stop sign on this corner, and this would be my target. This way I could scour all the trash on this side, cross the road, then do the half mile on the east side back to my cabin. That's a full mile of trash pick up, and that seemed pretty decent.

As soon as I began, it started raining. Then the rain turned to snow. It was that crappy April kind of snow, wet and cold. But I persevered, mostly because I was already soaked, and it felt like I was doing a nice thing. I

thought about turning back, but I just kept heading towards the stop sign.

There was something nice about this moment. I could feel the results in the weight of the big plastic bag, and it seemed easy enough to keep walking to my turn around point.

When I got to the stop sign, at the base of the pole—*I found a full bottle of Neutrogena-45.*

It was waiting for me, quite literally, at a sign post.

This story might seem easy to dismiss, but to me, it's absolutely intertwined with the other UFO weirdness. But why? How do I interpret this? How would Leo Sprinkle look at this?

It happened at a STOP sign, and if nothing else it was telling me to stop and pay attention. I was 44 years old at the time, and the bottle was labeled with a big 45. Was this foreshadowing something after my next birthday?

I can't help but marvel at the altruistic angle in this story. It felt like the universe was rewarding me for a simple good deed.

The story isn't perfect. That bottle had been there for a while, potentially all winter. The contents had separated into a runny yellow oil and a gummy white glop. It was kinda gross and completely useless as sunblock—a mystical lesson in cosmic duality?

Text added in Nov. 2018:

I'll add that I later got a new bottle, and it doesn't irritate my skin. I found it at the big grocery store I'd previously avoided.

I need to share something that I wasn't in this initial essay—my feelings when I first saw the bottle at the base of the sign. It should have been shocking, but it felt oddly normal.

My first thought was: *"It's THEM!"* In that moment I didn't want to even think about who *"them"* might be, but my gut feeling was that beings from a UFO had staged this for me. I didn't like that thought, and tried hard to push it out of my mind.

That bottle of sunblock arrived in April of 2007, and I feel like I can point to this event as the beginning of a great unraveling. I was confronted with something profound, and sensed a connection to UFOs. Pushing it out of my mind didn't work, the universe had its own plan—just now, I mistakenly typed, "the universe had its *owl plan*," instead of "own plan."

Waking to the sound of crying

Wednesday, March 4, 2009

This goes back awhile, to sometime in 2000. At the time I had a girlfriend Carol (not her real name), and I cared about her very much. She lived in the same town just a few miles away.

I was at my house alone, and I woke with a start to the sound of Carol crying. It was just a brief moment, but it was unmistakably her. I looked at the clock, and it was about 5 a.m.. This seemed odd, but I dismissed it and went back to sleep.

Later that day, Carol called me to check in and chat. At the end of the call I asked, “Carol, I know this is an odd question, but were you crying this morning at 5 o’clock?”

She paused, and very hesitantly replied, “Yes.”

I explained that I woke up out of a sound sleep and distinctly heard her crying. She did NOT want to hear about anything so strange. We never talked about it again.

Angel at the grocery store

Wednesday, March 4, 2009

I teach winter camping for an outdoor school in the Northern Rockies. After a two-week course, it's nice to get the stink out of the down sleeping bag. This is no casual undertaking. A winter bag rated to 40 degrees below zero is huge, too big for any washing machine at home. It only fits in the biggest washer at the laundromat, and takes forever to dry.

I was at the local laundromat on the main street in my little town, stuck there with that down bag in the dryer. I would open the door, feel the dampness and add another quarter.

It was a quiet day, and I was sharing the laundromat with a family of Mexican farm workers. The young couple had a few kids running around—they didn't seem to speak any English, so all I could do was smile at them periodically.

These big industrial dryers are set up a bit awkwardly, one on top of the other, with two sets of buttons on a narrow panel in the middle that control both units. I was using the bottom dryer, and the Mexican family had the one on top. I added a quarter, then realized it was the wrong slot. I'd just mistakenly given the family an extra seven minutes of time.

No biggie. But, I somehow managed to do this two more times. I just "gave" the Mexican family 75 cents. Why was I so confused about using a dryer?

I wasn't interested in asking the family for my money, that seemed silly. At the same time, I went through all kinds of weird liberal guilt about what I had done. I played it out in my head—had I just altruistically helped these poor people? Wasn't it nice that I, the privileged white American, could be so selfless? I immediately recognized how pathetic and useless that avenue of thinking was, and dismissed the whole thing.

Not too long after, the sleeping bag was dry, and I left.

From the laundromat I went directly to the local grocery store. I got what I needed and stood in line at the checkout with my few items.

As I inched forward in the line, I noticed the checkout girl. The strange thing was, in my head I immediately announced to myself, "She's an angel!"

I was awestruck.

She was young and extremely pretty. She had dark hair and dark eyes—and I assumed she was Mexican. She was quiet and smiled as she helped the customers in line ahead of me. There was something so radiant and pleasant about her, and the silent way she went about her job left me genuinely touched.

When I reached the cash register, she rang up the few items on the conveyor belt, and I pulled out my wallet to pay.

But I didn't have enough cash. Without saying a word, she showed me the total, and I realized I was exactly 75 cents short. I was embarrassed and said I would return an item to the shelf. She didn't speak, she casually pantomimed to me not to worry. Then she reached under the counter between us and brought up her purse. She dug through it, pulled out a little change purse and calmly counted out three quarters, and put them in the cash register. She smiled, I thanked her and walked away.

I had never seen her before, or since.

I recognized the synchronicity of those three quarters the moment she pulled them out of her change purse. Reviewing this event from a few years later, the thing that impresses me is the life lesson. I needed this, right then.

In the previous years I'd suffered through a lot of difficult emotions. This had been a dark time of isolation and depression.

It's sad to admit, but something as normal as people being nice to me would induce anxiety, I felt like I wasn't "worthy" to receive kindness. The simplest things were challenging. I wouldn't let friends buy me lunch, or if someone complimented something I had drawn, I would awkwardly find a way to deny their praise. I was unable to say thank you.

But on this day in the grocery store, the very lovely cashier did something nice, and the power of the synchronicity disarmed me to the point where I smiled (truly smiled!), said an honest thank you—and moved on.

Since that day, I feel like I've been really good at saying thank you. This was a really important hurdle in my life.

Text added June 2011:

About that Mexican cashier in the story. She said nothing at all, to me or to the customers ahead of me in the line. She simply smiled and pantomimed everything.

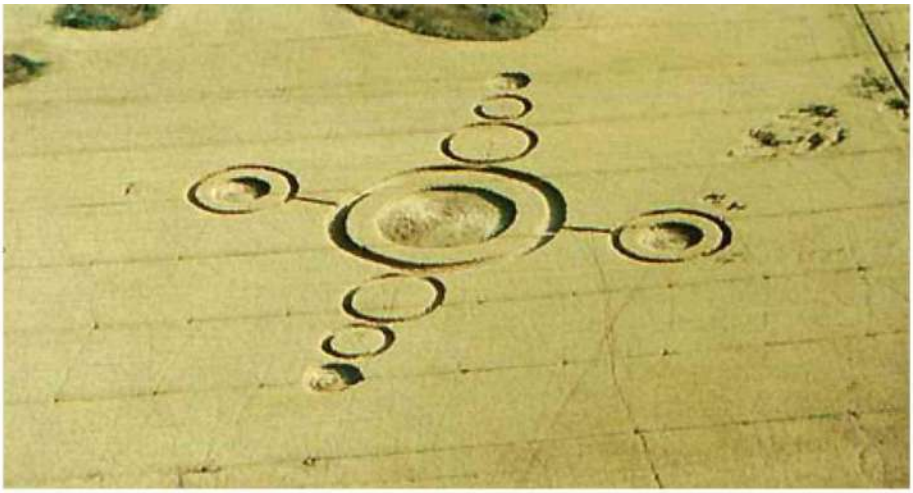
In this essay I said that the Mexican cashier was pretty. Well, let me clarify that—do you know who she looked like?

If you were making a Hollywood movie about the birth of Christ, you would need a young woman to play the role of the Virgin Mary, this cashier would be the perfect casting choice. *Yes, she was the incarnation of Mary, mother of Jesus.*

It's as if I had come face to face with an archetype of mystical purity. This silent cashier was the embodiment of a subtle kind of perfect beauty. I have never been in the presence of anyone who radiated something so kind and calm. The Blessed Virgin/angel/cashier I saw looked very much like the Colombian actress Catalina Sandino Moreno. It's hard to know, but the girl I saw seemed as if she was barely 20 years old.

Teton crop circle

Thursday, March 5, 2009



Teton, Idaho 2002

This set of events unfolded in the summer of 2002. This was the weekend the Mel Gibson movie *Signs* premiered, a film with crop circles central to the plot.

It was mid-day and I was at my desk doing the mundane stuff of my everyday life, when I had this sudden flash. I thought to myself, “We need a crop circle here, that would be so fun! It would really shake things up!”

This thought just emerged in my mind out of nowhere, and the idea seemed have a simple sort of playful tone. It was just a nice thought.

The next day I saw a friend on the street here in Driggs. We chatted for a little while, then she offhandedly added, “A crop circle appeared in Teton last night.”

What?

I was surprised, and asked her for more details. She had actually just returned from visiting the circle. It was outside the little town of Teton Idaho, about 39 miles away. I knew right then that I needed to go visit this thing. Within minutes I bumped into another pal, a fellow named Jeff, and told him about it. Without any hesitation, we both hopped in my little Subaru and drove to the site. Jeff has been a friend from my little town since I moved here, and he’s a good sounding board for all things paranormal and

conspiratorial. We are strangely similar in our fascination with this fringe stuff.

When we arrived at the site, there were about a dozen cars parked alongside the little country road, and a lot of people milling around. We looked up onto a gentle little hill and saw an obvious pattern of circles in the field of wheat.

We hopped out of the car and immediately met a very attractive woman. Her name was Stace Tussel, and we start talking. She was a researcher, and she proceeded to show us a series of ziploc bags filled with soil and crop samples, all labeled and organized.

Then, and this came out of nowhere, she announces that she is working on a book about UFOs. I was a little surprised because she'd abruptly changed the subject, and it was a topic I was extremely interested in. I asked what it was about, and she went on to say that it was a collection of curious and funny stories associated with the UFO phenomenon.

Then she said something very interesting, "I am not sure of the title, but I know what I want the cover to look like. I want it to look just like a comic book cover from the 1950s with exaggerated hand-lettering and drawings of people reacting to flying saucers in a cartoony sort of way."

She went on, "I know exactly what I want, but I haven't found an illustrator yet."

With that, Jeff lets out a big belly laugh.

I pull out my wallet and hand her my business card. I say, "Well, you don't have to look anymore, because I'm the guy."

Now, I don't know how much you know about me and my illustration style, but *everything* I draw seems to look like it's stuck in a comic book from the 1950's, complete with exaggerated hand-lettering, so this was more than a little bit coincidental.

Again, these synchronicities all have a tone of playfulness.

Text added 2018:

Stace also told us that she had seen a strange object in the sky that morning. She has her own blog, and she wrote about her remarkable experience at the Teton crop circle (linked here). She had arrived the night before, and was up early to measure the site and gather samples. She wrote:

> Walking through the wheat this time, there were no people and not a breath of wind. A few little birds flew nearby, chirping in the cool air. Now, this is what I had come for: a chance to immerse myself peacefully in the crop circle energy and do my work undisturbed…
>
> I was working in the southernmost circle when something amazing, astonishing, and very-nearly unbelievable happened—something I believe evidences a radical piece of the crop circle puzzle, and something I will never, ever forget: I looked up to see that while I was observing the crop circle, a small UFO was observing me!
>
> The disk was perhaps the diameter of a basketball, if I'm guessing its altitude correctly—it was likely no more than a hundred yards above me; probably even half that distance away. I was frozen, jaw dropped, gazing in wonder at what was apparently a "probe" type of saucer. The small craft hovered and moved gently in the air directly overhead, completely silent.
>
> Against the deep, early morning blue of the sky, the dull grey of the disk didn't stand out; instead, the intensity of the two colors was virtually identical…

She dropped her notepad and sprinted to get her binoculars sitting nearby in the formation. This took less than ten seconds, but when she looked up the UFO was gone. Stace also interviewed several locals who had seen anomalous lights from different vantage points on the night before it was found. She also wrote:

> I feel this formation was probably non-human made, but can't be sure… Time may provide us some clues… but just perhaps, the connection between people, UFOs, and crop circles will remain a delightful enigma to entertain our developing, inquisitive minds. And perhaps an inter-intelligence dialogue, with a language all its own, is meant to be at the heart of the mystery.

Here's a little bit more about the site of the crop circle. I had a nightmare when I was in elementary school and still remember it clearly, nearly fifty years later. I was in an old country general store at night, there was an evil presence, and I sensed something monstrous. I ran out onto the street, and everything was eerie and quiet. I stood there in the silence, all alone. It's not much, but this dream had a powerful mood and the menacing presence was palpable.

Teton Idaho is a neighboring town to Driggs, where I lived for over twenty years. The first time I drove down that main street at night, I realized that this was the location of my dream. The general store is all closed up, but I got the distinct impression that *this was the same place*.

The crop circle was found along a country road less than two miles to the south of the lonely street in my boyhood dream.

Two phone calls from my hospital bed

Saturday, March 7, 2009

In 1993, I moved from New York City to a dusty town in rural Idaho. I'd spent a decade in the city doing illustrations for ad agencies. It was unsatisfying, and I desperately wanted to take on new drawing work. I had been dreaming of doing book and magazine illustrations instead of the drudgery of advertising.

At the same time, I wanted to start working as an instructor for an outdoor school in the Rocky Mountains. After ten long years in the corporate world, it was my dream to play the role of an educator in the mountains. There was a strong pull to change careers.

I had applied and been accepted to take the instructor training for a prestigious outdoor school, and was due to begin the 35-day course in May. This was a dream come true.

I was still doing advertising illustrations from my little cabin in the winter of 1994, using the fax machine to send art to my clients back in New York. I was yearning for other jobs, but it felt impossible to break into a new avenue of work. I was pigeonholed into a very narrow style of drawing, and felt stuck.

Late in the winter of 1994, I had a high fever and a dull ache in my belly. I spent a sweaty day laid out on the couch lost in a spiraling chaos of trippy dreams. The next morning I called my doctor and went into his office. He was quite concerned and suspected appendicitis. He withdrew blood, did a white cell count, then sent me immediately to the emergency room at the local hospital.

I spent the next 24 hours being poked, prodded and tested by a team of doctors. They all suspected appendicitis, but weren't sure. The next morning I went into surgery thinking I'd simply have my appendix removed, a normal procedure, and I'd be fine after a week or so.

When I came out of general anesthesia, the doctors were gravely serious. They told me the surgery was much more complicated than they'd expected. There was a large infectious mass in my abdomen, and that was highly unusual. They were forced to remove approximately one third of my large

intestine, and I should expect a long recovery.

Two days earlier I was healthy and strong, but now I was stuck in a bed with a creepy web of tubes going in and out of me. I had a gruesome incision stapled shut that ran from my groin to my ribs. The pain was debilitating, and the weakness crushed me.

I laid in that bed feeling horrible. My only concern was the impending 35-day instructor's course in May. I was supposed to begin a new career in less than two months, and my heart sank because that obviously wasn't going to happen. My dream had evaporated. I called the school and spoke with my admissions contact. I told him I was in a hospital bed and had no idea when I would be strong enough, if ever, to take on the training.

My mood was horrendously low when I hung up.

The very next call was to check my answering machine at home for messages. I laid in the hospital bed, and heard a loud, boisterous voice in my ear.

"Mike buddy, Largo here. Gimme a call. We got work to do!"

He left a number and hung up.

Largo is the nickname of John Long, a famous rock climber in California. I had no idea how he found my name, or why he would call me. I dialed his number and he picked up the phone. He had this goofy way of talking, like we were lifelong pals. He told me he was writing an instructional climbing book and wanted me to do the illustrations. He loved my cartoon style, and thought it would be perfect for this book.

I asked how he'd heard about me, and he said the editor at *Climbing Magazine* had shown him some of my cartoons. It took me a moment to figure out what this meant, then I remembered about a year earlier I'd sent a manila envelope to that magazine with a handful of xeroxed pages. There wasn't much to it, just some samples of my cartoon style.

I told him I was in the hospital and had just come out of surgery that morning, and had no idea when I'd be back at my desk.

Largo grunted, "What? Well get the hell out of there, I don't want any excuses—*we've got a book to create!*"

I just had two phone calls, one where I told a school that I was too weak to work for them. This meant that a long time dream had vanished—poof, gone. But the next call had been with a funny guy telling me I was going to illustrate his book.

One dream had disappeared, while another arrived.

My recovery was excruciatingly slow, and nine days later I walked out of the hospital on shaky legs.

I spent the summer recuperating at the desk drawing cartoons for Largo's book. This lead to another book, then a bunch more. I also began doing monthly illustrations for *Climbing Magazine*.

On April 1, 1994 (yes, April Fool's Day), I had two back to back phone calls in a hospital bed while my head was still in the fog of general anesthesia. I had one dream evaporate, and then a new career magically appeared out of nowhere.

Text added in 2018:

I've illustrated about 25 books, all in the same playful goofy style that began with that phone call from my hospital bed.

I'll add that later in August of 1994, I was strong enough to take that training course in Wyoming. I dedicated myself to teaching, and rose to the rank of senior instructor at the school. I trained newer instructors in advanced winter camping skills, and glacier rescue techniques.

The time count on this 2009 posting is 12:34. I noticed this at the time, but it didn't mean much. Since then, this synchronistic number has become a big deal for me, and I'm forced to pay attention when it appears.

cartoon from John Long's 1994 book
"Clip and Go!"

Out Kenny's window

Saturday, March 7, 2009

This image was drawn over 30 years after the sighting, and it feels pretty close to my memory

When I was about 12 years old, I went to my friend Kenny's house for a weekend sleep over. This was in Northville Michigan around 1974, and I was either in the sixth or seventh grade. It was nighttime, and we were in an upstairs room when one of us (I don't remember who) pointed out the window and said, "What's that?"

The room was dark, and we both moved our faces right up to the glass.

We clearly saw something, a craft of some sort, shaped like a coffee can

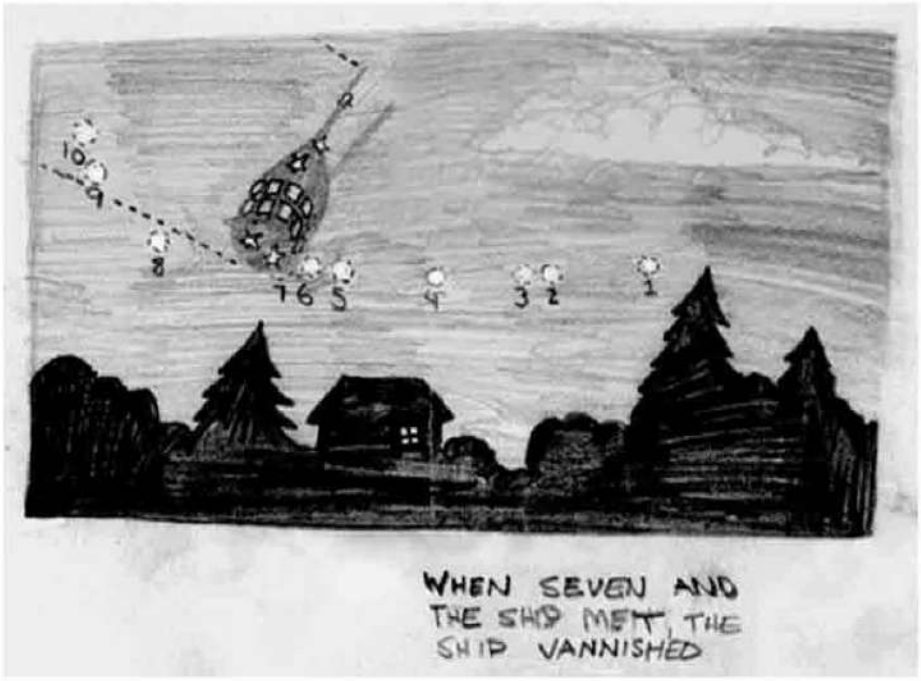
with a pencil sticking out of the top. It was larger in the sky than a full moon, and we watched it for probably less than a minute. It was descending near the horizon in an eerily controlled way and was rotating slowly as it gradually moved lower, traveling at an odd angle—*and then it was gone!*

While the big coffee can was visible, there was also a tiny blinking light moving in the opposite direction across the night sky. To my eye it looked perfectly ordinary, like nothing more than the running lights of an airplane in the night sky. It was easy to track, each strobing white blink showed its progress as it moved steadily toward the craft, and it was obvious they were going to bump into each other. The moment they connected the big craft vanished and the little blinking light continued on. It veered upward, and drifted away.

We were really excited, but decided not to talk about it. We ran downstairs to the kitchen table where we knew there were pencils and paper. Kenny's mom was also at the table, and she watched as we each drew what we'd just seen. We both drew essentially the same thing. I still have the drawing.

At first I drew the shape as a true cylinder, but Kenny corrected me, pointed out that the edges of the "coffee can" were slightly beveled. He was right.

While at the table, Kenny told me he hadn't seen the little blinking lights as they approached the coffee can—he only noticed them after the thing vanished, and the lights trailed off in the night sky.



Pencil image from 1974, drawn minutes after seeing it

Depiction of the tiny blinking lights moving across the sky

The illustration shows the blinking lights as they moved toward the "coffee can" in the night sky. I drew the lights in the original pencil sketch as if it were an alternating "blink" and then a "double-blink." I even numbered them. Presently, I can't remember exactly how it was blinking. The updated drawing shows only a single "blink" effect.

It's hard to know how big the craft might have been. It seemed about the size of a van, but it might have been a lot bigger. It appeared to be some sort of flat black metal, and the lights around the outside looked like windows, but I can't be sure.

When I would tell this story in my youth, I would say that when the blinking lights met the coffee can, the lights of the craft turned off and we couldn't see it anymore. This was me trying to sound believable. I didn't have the nerve to say what really happened; it seemed too bizarre, but I'm saying it now, *it vanished*. It was instantaneous—just "blink!" and gone. It was only after I'd begun to read UFO books (somewhat compulsively) in the early 90s that I would share the experience more truthfully, and say that the craft had disappeared.

This sighting left me with the very distinct impression that I was seeing something otherworldly, and this feeling is hard to describe—but it was overwhelming. And ever since then, whenever I read accounts of UFO sightings, I think, "Well, I've seen one."

Text added Dec. 10, 2010:

I recently found a good analogy about how it felt seeing that craft from Kenny's window. I'm old enough to remember an era before computer generated animation. Until a point in the early 80s, there was simply no such thing—any animation would have been analog created using a camera and film. My eye, even at that young age, was attuned to cinematic imagery. It was truly arresting when I saw the very first computer generated imagery probably around 1979. I can recall it clearly, it was nothing more than a rotating cube, with simple videos on each panel (this short clip would be laughingly crude by today's standards). There was a *surreal smoothness* about the motion, not the staccato movements of cell animation.

I was confronted with something entirely beyond my reality. There was a

paradigm leap from clunky analog animation, to something entirely different.

That's how it felt to me—seeing the coffee can thing in the sky was like seeing an entirely unknown form of motion. It moved with an eerie smoothness that left me shaken.

Here's something odd—Kristen from the camping trip and all the owls was born and raised in Northville, Michigan. When she told me, the first thing I thought of was my sighting with Kenny. That small town will forever be associated with my UFO memory. Not sure if that means anything, but it's a curious detail.

Text added Dec. 2018:

I wanted to ask Kenny if he remembered that night, so I searched for him in 2007. The first call was to his mother. I'd spent a lot of time at Kenny's house as a boy, and it was wonderful to hear her voice again.

She sounded really happy to hear my voice, and told me that Kenny had just talked about me the other day. She laughed and said, "This is just like ESP that you called!"

She gave me Kenny's number, and we spoke for the first time in over 43 years. I was nervous bringing up the reason I'd called, but eventually asked him about the sighting. He said he didn't remember anything about it. We talked for a little while longer, and I think he felt bad he couldn't confirm what had happened.

Kenny called back a few days later. He told his mom that I'd asked him about a UFO sighting from when we were around 12 years old. She remembered us at the kitchen table that night, eagerly trying to draw what we had seen.

Whitley Strieber reads this blog

Thursday, March 12, 2009

Whitley Strieber has a popular website called *Unknown Country*, and on Wednesday evenings he participates in its online chatroom. Yesterday I logged onto the site and went to the room for first time. I did it on a lark, not really sure what to expect. There were 38 other people in there all frantically typing away, so it was hard to follow any of the conversations. It was just a chaotic series of rapid fire comments.

I nervously type “hello” in among the other fans.

Whitley saw MIKEC, my forum name, and said: “Mike’s blog is great! Don’t miss the one about the owls.”

This felt so weird. It took me a moment to make sense of what I was seeing. How did he know about my blog? I asked some questions on the forum to figure it out. Then I checked my blog and found that just a few hours earlier Whitley had left the very first comment below the owl story from March 4. What he wrote was insightful and poetic; the full text is included in the next post.

It was later that night when Mac Tonnies told me that he’d sent Whitley a message on twitter directing him to my owl story. I heard from the chat-room visitors that Whitley began this session with an invitation to his fans to visit my blog. My God—the internet is a *curious* thing.

I’ve always been extremely impressed by Whitley Strieber, so this was surprising—this blog has been up for barely a week, and the man himself is adding comments.

There are few personalities in this field that can compare to Whitley Strieber. He’s intense, and brings out strong opinions in people.

I've met him. We had a really nice chat, and he was supportive when I told him about my anxieties.

I’ll add that he’s over six feet tall, and has powerful presence in a room. When I met him at UFO conference in 2007, he was wearing a suit and tie in a room full of flowery new-age people in flowy dresses and baggy hemp pants. This stark contrast made him all the more imposing.

He was standing in line for coffee when I introduced myself. Without any

niceties, I jumped right to the issue that was troubling me. I told him I was trying to come to terms with my experiences, and how it all seemed to point to a series of ongoing abductions.

I said, “I’m looking into this, and I’m really—well—really freaked out.”

Whitley said, “I should say so!”

Here’s what he told me next:

“You know how when you look at a lake at that moment of a beautiful sunset, and the light is reflecting off the surface of the water. What you are seeing is the color of the sky, and the dazzling display of the sunset.”

He made a hand gesture to describe the flat surface of a lake out in front of him, then said. “But at the same time, you may get a glimpse of what’s under the surface of the water, but you can only see a distorted refraction. I feel that’s what’s going on here—we see something that we can’t quite perceive. It’s hidden from us, and what we do see is distorted and refracted. There is a LOT going on under the water.”

That’s as good an analogy as I’ve ever heard about this entire mixed-up quandary.

Kristen talks about owls (and God)

Thursday, March 12, 2009

I took a picture of Kristen on the morning after our second owl event in 2006. I contacted her to ask her if I could add this photo on my blog. I also told her that none other than Whitley Strieber had commented on our owl story. Kristen wrote:

> Sure! I like that picture. Strangely enough, spending a lot of time in my grandma's room as she was dying, I noticed that she had that picture on her dresser. I must have sent it to her at some point.
>
> That is so cool about Whitley Strieber. I remember picking up his book from my parents' shelf when I was six or seven, and showing it to all my friends and us all being freaked out. I am all about the divine aspect of this whole thing. Obviously. I like that he said that, about being connected to God. Because that night I saw the owls and whenever I dream of them, that is the benevolent sort of "spirit guide" feeling I get. Not that they are otherworldly, but that they are… "in" worldly.
>
> Because there's no way that I could explain any of this outside of the context of God. And, you know, not "God" in the "because the Bible tells me so" sense, but God in the real, eternal, "I know this much is true" sense. (please excuse the shitload of quotation marks, I just had a long night...) And by God you know what I mean...the all-that-is...etc. (she said, always remaining self-conscious of sounding Churchy and alienating...whoa, *alienating* people).
>
> That's what I felt and that's what I feel...that if anything happened that night, it was definitely some sort of communion with the all-that-is. (As I was just writing that sentence, I remembered that Whitley Strieber's book was called *Communion*, right?)

Text added 2018:

I posted the initial owl story with Kristen on March 4 2009, the second day of the blog's incarnation. The very first comment came from none other than Whitley Strieber, and this was what Kristen was referring to in her letter above. I suspect he read the essay and just zipped out a rapid fire reply. I don't imagine he spent much time pondering what to say, that said I'm impressed at the outright divinity of his comment. He wrote:

> The grays come in threes. They often appear as owls. Contrary to popular belief, they are profoundly surrendered to God. We find this frightening, because we are not. An experience like that is mostly outside of space and time. You need not look back on it. It is always happening for you both and all who know of it, forever. So, thank you!

I was shocked to see his comment at a point when pretty much nobody could have known about my blog. He said that the owls were, “surrendered to God” and Kristen was speaking about that in her email to me. This all plays into something more from almost three years earlier. Here’s an excerpt from my initial owl post:

> While we were eating, our conversation reached a point where we were opening up about our spiritual beliefs and insights. As I listened to Kristen, there was a moment when I realized that there was something truly impressive about her. She was perceptive in a way that inspired me.

It was after posting our story on the blog that I recognized the synchronous power of the moment when the owls appeared—it happened in a moment tied to spirituality. I couldn’t remember what we were talking about, so I reached out and contacted Kristen. I asked her if she remembered what we were talking about on the first night when the first owl swooped above us.

Without hesitating she said, “Oh yeah, I remember exactly what I was saying. I was trying to articulate my deepest beliefs about God. It was right then that the owls appeared.”

I was shocked at the intensity of what she shared. That one detail adds a depth to the overall experience that tips it into the realm of the transcendent.

Whitley’s comments about God came *before* I realized that Kristen had been talking about God at the moment of our initial sighting.

If only I could muster up my courage

Saturday, March 14, 2009

I am trying to be brave, but it's been oppressive and scary. This blog was created in a flurry, and it was all about a deep need to share my unusual experiences with the world. Where is this need is coming from? I wish I could answer that.

I know full well what my next post needs to be, and it requires bravery, or maybe the better way to say it—it requires *abandonment*.

I saw a UFO in 1974 and I've been wanting to post a story about it. I happened in my hometown, but I've been stuck, unable to put it on this blog. Well, I didn't really "see" anything beyond a very strange orange flash in the sky, but my friend told me he saw a UFO. My memory is that it lasted only a second—it was silent, and weirdly jarring. I arrived home almost two hours later than I should have, and the implications are disturbing. There is more to this story, and hopefully it'll be the next post.

I can point to the exact spot on the sidewalk where it happened. It was about a block from the house where I grew up, in front of the home of Cindy Gail, an elementary school classmate. There's a sweet emotional part of my childhood all wrapped up in this house.

It was 1967 when I entered Mrs. Dunn's kindergarten classroom and first met Cindy. I'll add that she was my very first crush. She had light red hair and freckles, and there was something so centered and calm about her. I remember her art projects, and they were always tidy and perfect. I envied her sense of self.

Cindy moved away when we were both still in elementary school. That was over 30 years ago, and I had no idea what happened to her.

Fast forward to yesterday. I spent the day with friends cross-country skiing in the foothills of the Tetons. It was a glorious time, but I was preoccupied. Something kept spinning in my mind, there was an oppressive need to post that story about the long-ago event on the sidewalk in front of Cindy's house. The implications of that night are scary, and I was wallowing in insecurities. Was I brave enough to share what happened? I didn't know if I could go through with it.

My time skiing was spent trying to visualize how I would post the story online. There was already a visual created for the story, a few days earlier I'd used Google Earth to get an image of Cindy's house, and used Photoshop to put a yellow X on the sidewalk at the *exact* spot where we were when we saw the orange flash.

I've spent a lot of time compulsively staring at that image, and everything it implied. I figured the satellite view of my old neighborhood would work okay as a picture for this nerve-wracking post.

And I was planning to do it last night, if I could only muster up the courage.

I was tired and unmotivated after skiing, all I could do was sit at my desk and stare at the computer. I knew what I needed to do, but it felt so daunting. I could so clearly visualize that haunted spot in front of Cindy's house.

The story of that night was already written, and I'd pasted it into the blog template. I needed to clean up a few things, and add the image with the yellow X on the sidewalk—but I just couldn't.

I was stuck, unable to follow my heart. My hands were resting on the keyboard, but I did nothing. I wasn't brave enough.

I was sitting there frozen when my computer made a pair of quiet pings. That meant I'd received two emails, and I was grateful for the distraction. I clicked on my inbox

The first message was, unbelievably, a Facebook friend request from Cindy Gail.

What?

I stared at my computer in utter disbelief. Oh my God, was this really happening? I immediately replied to the request, and added this message:

> **Mike Clelland (at 10:29 p.m. on March 12) wrote:**
> Cindy Gail? You did a "show & tell" in Mrs. Wyler's first grade class showing how to fold a piece of paper, and gently lick the fold. Then you easily tore the paper in a nice straight line. Clean and perfect. I still do this, and EVERY time I do—I think of you!
>
> **At 10:33 p.m., this message came back:**
> Yes, that's me!! I think of you whenever I see cartoons! Are you still wearing Wonder Bread bags inside of your boots? I was so envious that your mom did that.

We talked back and forth via Facebook, and I was absolutely

overwhelmed. I even tried to tell her how utterly weird the coincidence was, that she contacted me right when she did.

It would be hard to describe how magical and wonderful this felt. It felt like there was sparkling “Disney Dust” (the cartoon stuff from Tinkerbell’s wand) swirling around me as I sat at the computer.

And to make things even weirder, the second email that came with the same set of pings, was from the infamous UFO experiencer Whitley Strieber. He was now following my blog updates on Twitter.

If my life is a path, and if I pay attention, I can sense its direction. This path is leading me somewhere. The universe is whispering a stream of little clues, and these are all inching me toward one thing, that I share my extremely curious life events with the world. Yesterday I was stuck on that path, unable to move forward, frozen and cowardly. Then at 10:27 p.m., I was slapped in the head by a Facebook friend request from the cutest girl in Mrs. Dunn’s kindergarten class!

I now have the courage to post the next story.

Orange flash and missing time

Saturday, March 14, 2009

It was a pleasant and clear autumn night in Michigan, and I was living in a quiet suburb of Detroit. It was 1974, I was 12 years old and in the seventh grade. It was Friday night and there was a football game at the local high school, and I'd left before it had ended.

It was normal for me to walk the half-mile back to my house. I was with my friend (also named Mike), who was walking in the same direction. We were close to my home in a neighborhood of small houses on a quiet well lit street—the scene was completely normal and calm. We were in front of a house where an elementary school pal named Cindy Gail used to live.

I know the exact spot on the sidewalk where we were when everything above us was suddenly bright orange. The entire sky lit up in a bold flash—it felt like someone just flipped a switch and the sky lit up orange, and a second later the switch was flipped off—and everything was back to normal. There was no noise, it was completely silent.

We were both surprised and blurted out, *"What just happened?"*

The event was over instantly, so there was nothing to see. I know I saw something, but there's an odd disconnect in my memory. Something unsettling had happened, and I remember thinking it was jarring.

We went through a rapid checklist of things in might have been. Was it a meteor? Was it lightning? Was it an explosion off in the distance? Could a nearby power pole have shot off sparks? We talked about it right in the moment, but nothing seemed to fit.

The color seemed utterly bizarre—it was a deep saturated orange. To this day, whenever I see a dying campfire I marvel at how the coals glow that warm radiant orange. I'll think to myself, "That's how the sky looked above Cindy Gail's house."

We continued to my house, I said goodbye to Mike on the sidewalk and walked up to my door. He lived about a half a mile further through the neighborhood, and continued walking.

I was excited to get inside and watch a television show I really loved: *Kolchak, The Night Stalker*. It started at ten o'clock, and I remember leaving

the football game in order to get home in plenty of time so I could watch this show. But when I walked in the door, my parents were angry I was out so late. I was surprised because I had made certain to be home by 9:30. The TV was on, and the 11 o'clock news was ending. It was close to 11:30, and this leaves between an hour and a half and two hours of missing time.

Everything seemed odd. My parents were mad at me, but I hadn't done anything wrong, and had no explanation for the lost time. I didn't know what to think, but more than anything I was genuinely disappointed I'd missed that cool TV show.

The next Monday, a group of friends were all in the cafeteria at my junior high school. My friend Mike was there with us, and I told everyone that we had seen a bizarre light on Friday night. Mike immediately added, "Yeah, we saw a UFO with fuckin' lights and everything!"

What? I hadn't seen anything with lights. Did he see something I hadn't? My immediate thought was he was making it up, and that this is how stories get blown out of proportion. Mike and I never mentioned that night again. That was over 34 years ago, and I have no idea what has happened to him.

I've always had a memory of this event, but the pieces were disjointed. I clearly remember the orange light in the night sky, and I've always had a definite memory of missing that TV show, and my parents being angry at me for being out late.

It wasn't until the late 1990s that I remembered both these events together. It happened while watching an interview with Chris Carter, the creator of *The X-Files*. He talked excitedly about his childhood and how he loved a certain TV show, and this was the inspiration for *The X-Files*. He said the show was *Kolchak, The Night Stalker*. When I heard that, both memories resurfaced with an electric jolt. These two events slammed together in my head.

I suddenly realized this all happened on the *same night.* I jumped off the couch and paced around my cabin in anxious circles. I've read a lot of UFO books, and the implications of this realization unnerved me to my core.

I recently googled KOLCHAK, and this TV show was only on for one season. That means I can pinpoint this event to the fall of 1974. The show was on Friday nights at ten o'clock, exactly as I had remembered.

Text added July 31, 2009:

If you've made it this far, you need to read about the curious re-emergence

of Mike, my friend from that night. Again, it happened at an intensely synchronistic moment via Facebook. This is described in a post titled: *the universe answers my plea*.

Text added August 2009:

Since we re-connected in March, I have been chatting via Facebook with Cindy over the last few months. I chatted with her last night, and a curious thing came up. I remembered that Cindy had moved away from my hometown when she was in second grade, but that wasn't right. She corrected me, saying she lived in the house on the corner (in the photo) until the end of seventh grade, which would have been the spring of 1975.

That means she would've still been living in that house when the orange flash occurred. For some reason, this surprised me. It was over 30 years ago, so maybe I'd just forgotten, but this felt strange.

We talked about our elementary school—we were in the same classrooms, and I remembered a lot of details about our teachers and friends. We both told funny stories about our youth in that neighborhood, yet I had no memories of her after second grade. This was strange—we were friends, yet I can't remember anything about her for a period of about five years.

I realize now that she might have been in her house, just a short distance away from me on that autumn night in 1974.

More text added on Sept. 2, 2009:

I just got off the phone with Cindy. She is still friends with the couple who used to live next door in our old neighborhood. They are now elderly, and she makes a point of visiting them.

She asked them if they remembered me, and they said they didn't. Cindy told them that I've been doing UFO research. After hearing this, they told her a story from sometime in the mid-1970s. They remember standing on their porch and watching a glowing green UFO hovering over Cindy's house. She has no memory of this, so it was quite a surprise for her. This sighting would have happened before Cindy and her family moved out of the neighborhood in 1975. I asked Cindy to find out more, hoping they might remember something else, but nothing has happened.

Looking out my window at night

Thursday, March 19, 2009

drawn from memory

I'm attempting to recount a very short memory. It probably lasted less than thirty seconds and the implications have been difficult to integrate into my life. I've been terribly conflicted. It could have been a dream, but it didn't feel that way.

It happened in January or February of 1993, while living alone in a in a wooded area of rural Maine. I'd been dealing with a hard break up, and was in a fragile emotional state. My depressed mood might be an important factor in this story.

The driveway of the house had one of those motion sensitive lights, and it

was pretty common for the light to come on when a car drove by or a deer walked through the front yard, or even if the wind blew. The bedroom window faced the driveway, and the head of my bed was up against that window.

I was very depressed and sleeping poorly. I'm not sure what time it would have been, but I woke up because a very bright light was shining in through the bedroom window. I sat up, propped myself on elbow, and looked out the window. I saw five spindly entities with bald heads and big black eyes. They were on the snow walking toward the house, backlit by a single round shape, and this light seemed oddly small.

My response to this frightening image was to nonchalantly lay my head down on the pillow, and I promptly fell asleep.

Shouldn't I have jumped out of bed screaming in terror? Instead I felt empty, void of any emotion. I calmly thought to myself, "Oh yes, they're here, let's just shut down and black out."

And that's exactly what I did.

That thought in my head was clear and articulate. It wasn't so much a thought, I heard it in words. Were they my words, or was I being told something by an outside source? Was it a message, or a command? I've spent over a decade wondering.

Now, it's important that I add this extra information. This memory is *strangely vivid* in a way that seems entirely different from a normal state of mind.

I saw something, but at the same time I don't think it happened in "this" reality. That may sound hard to grasp, but it's the only way I can honestly explain the experience.

It's important that I do my best to describe this feeling. This wasn't anything nebulous—it was palpable and distinct, yet it's difficult to explain using words. It was weirdly quiet, sort of a pressurized fish bowl. It's like the deepest part of my psyche had been moved to the forefront, and the normal thought chatter in my head was turned off. It was like being in a vacuum without emotion, and all of it had an eerie hyper clarity.

There was a distinct warping of my psyche, whatever *that* means. This strange warped feeling shows up again a few years later as a key element in a funny dream where my brother has a flying saucer in his garage.

Did something happen that night, or did I simply imagine everything? Was

it just some sort of dream state? Maybe. That would be an easy way to sum it all up, but this vivid state of mind was so *weird* that I can't fully trust this memory.

The next morning I had the image of the five aliens seared into my mind, yet I could NOT allow myself to believe that something so strange could be true. I simply dismissed it as some sort of dream. But I never dream I'm in my own bed—I'm always somewhere else, and the imagery is somehow distorted. Yet my memory from that night exactly matched my bedroom.

Could my fragile emotional state have been a factor in this vivid image outside my window? I was terribly depressed at the time, and I've wondered if that could have created this scary delusion. In my weakened mental condition, was I more susceptible to some sort of weird hallucination? Maybe.

This brief memory is connected to a series of follow up stories, and all of these need to be explored. I will continue to post more about this very curious event.

Text added Oct. 31, 2009:

On the night of this event, I had been reading Budd Hopkin's 1987 book *Intruders*. It was right there on the bed, probably just inches from my pillow. For some readers, this might subtract from the potential reality of the experience. I mean, this book is filled with scary descriptions of skinny gray aliens, and my vulnerable mind was obviously flooded with that imagery as I fell asleep. Did these vivid images well up as a dream? I have no idea, but I can't exclude this as a possibility.

Text added March 25, 2010:

There was an odd part of this story that wasn't included when I posted this a little over a year ago. At the time it felt awkward to try and put into words, but I'm adding it now.

I remember looking past the five skinny beings, and being drawn to look at that light. It was behind them in the small open field surrounded by tall trees alongside my driveway. The light seemed unusually small, maybe the size of washing machine. To me, the bright light in the yard looked just like a Hollywood movie light mounted on a very short stand, pointed directly at my window.

Now, here's where it gets weird: this matches something from the feature film *Communion*, based on Whitley Strieber's book. While looking at that light out the window, I was reminded of a scene near the end of the film. Christopher Walken (playing Whitley) walked toward a bright light in a forest at night.

It's supposed to be an alien craft, but if you look carefully, you can see it's just a big movie light pointed at the camera. When I saw this, I thought to myself: "Oh, that's a simple way to create this special effect."

I had seen the movie sometime in the summer of 1992, and it was early in 1993 when I "saw" the five beings backlit outside my window. I saw the same kind of movie light in my yard, just like in the film, and in those few seconds I remember thinking: "Oh, that's a simple way to create this special effect."

I had the same word-for-word thought in my mind, and dismissed this as perfectly normal. In the moment there was nothing at all unusual about a movie light in my yard in the middle of the night, but at the same time—it was very odd.

Where do I go with this?

Is this proof it was nothing more than a dream? Or, did "they" somehow create a screen memory of a movie light? It feels like "they" quickly scanned my brain, picked an image from the files in my memory banks, and implanted the image of the movie light as a way to hide something. All this would have happened in less than a tenth of a second.

Okay, typing that description was hard. What I wrote is a big leap, *but that's how it feels*.

Am I using this "movie light" image to reinforce my own belief that nothing happened, to convince that it was just a dream? Or, is the overt sense of a screen memory telling me something very strange actually happened?

Here's an email excerpt from Mac Tonnies:

Sure, your recollections aren't as inexplicable or dramatic as some, but you've never claimed that they were. (I think I mentioned this in a comment on my blog, but I tend to think the episode with the five Grays really *was* a sort of waking dream, as I've experienced similar phenomena myself). But the point is that you're not making unsubstantiated claims and that your take on the UFO counterculture is articulate and worth hearing, even if one happens to disagree with it.

I agree with Mac on some level, I don't think this literally happened. I simply don't know. That said, 18 years later, the memory still haunts me.

Text added Dec. 2018:

At this point, 25 years later, I feel this event wasn't a dream—I think it truly happened. I say this not because of the memories of that night, but due to a series of follow up experiences. I've since had that "altered reality" feeling three more times, and each time it was part of what seems to be a UFO memory.

These events are each covered their own posts:

1. Funny dream in my brother's garage
2. Confirmation anxiety
3. Irrational fear inside our tent

This has been a pattern for me. I will deny the implications of a powerful event, but later come to accept it because of other intertwined experiences. These seem to come in the form of synchronicities, psychic flashes, vivid dreams, lines on maps or owl interactions. My sense is the universe is showing me something, and if I don't acknowledge the significance, there'll be more experiences that force me to reexamine the deeper meaning.

I've made a real effort to ask UFO experiencers if they've ever felt this hyper-vivid state of consciousness, or something similar. Some have described what I feel is the same distorted sensation. A good example is a post titled: *The pecan story*.

I know a woman in the UK who's had a lifetime of UFO contact experiences, and even a few odd owl events. I spoke with her in person during the summer of 2014, and she tried to articulate what it felt like to be in the presence of this unknown force. She held up both hands with her palms facing each other, and slowly moved them closer together, and then just as slowly backed off.

She described the sensation of holding two powerful magnets so they repel each other, "You know that weird warbling energy, that's what it feels like, it's like my whole body is in between those magnets in that distorted zone."

When she said that, *I absolutely knew we had both experienced the same thing*, her description was exactly what I'd felt.

Trying to capture a memory with a pen

Saturday, March 21, 2009

quick sketch drawn from memory

The drawing below represents the same 1993 nighttime memory as in the previous posting. Here's the story of this illustration. For obvious reasons, that faint memory out my window haunted me. About a year after the event in Maine, I doodled this little drawing on the corner of a page with some other scribbles. I didn't dwell on it, just did a quick sketch, and I remember thinking, "Ewww, that's creepy."

I put the drawing in a drawer and forgot about it.

I found it recently, now over a decade since I'd drawn it. It was just a little sketch, merely black ink lines on a piece of white paper, probably drawn in 1994. It was supposed to be nighttime, but the drawing didn't capture that. I scanned it into my computer and used photoshop to create the dark interior with a bright light out the window.

The moody tones seemed to better capture my dim recollection, but it wasn't quite accurate. The memory was of five spindly entities, I am sure of that, but the drawing shows only two.

The much more precise follow-up drawing (in the previous post) was created last summer (2008) in an anxious kind of need.

After adding shading to the little sketch, I realized I simply had to draw a more detailed picture. It had been bugging me, and I'd avoided doing it. But I *needed* to do this drawing. Eventually I forced myself to sit at my desk and create this more detailed image. Please understand, this was not an easy process, I was anxious and obsessed putting the ink on the paper.

I clearly remember five entities lined up in the snow, but this drawing seems a little TOO tidy. It wasn't so orderly, and they weren't standing still. My memory is of them walking toward the house. The first drawing showed them walking, but it came out awkward. It looked like they were all doing a synchronized dance.

It wasn't working, so I redrew it with them standing side by side. Although it's not quite correct, this pose wasn't as distracting.

I realized something as I began the drawing. I knew that after finishing the illustration, it would *become* my memory. I knew that from this point on, the memory of what I had seen would be displaced by what I would draw. This made the act of creating the image feel emotionally heavy, and I understood the need to get it right.

I labored over the details. I initially drew the beings with a belt as part of their tight fitting uniforms, but the belt buckle didn't seem right. I erased it and redrew the image as if it was a one piece jumpsuit, but that didn't look right either. I finally added a thin line between the bottom of their shirts and the top of their pants, and that seemed better. By the time I drew and redrew the variations of what they were wearing, I wasn't sure of anything. What I can say is that the image *feels* pretty close to what I remember seeing that night.

I included a little toy dinosaur on the windowsill, and that's accurate too. Mac Tonnies commented on the drawing that he liked it!

I'll add that there have been a series of comments from people who've read these posts. They (quite correctly) point out this could have been some sort of dream state that I am confusing with reality. Sleep apnea or a hypnogogic hallucination are appropriate terms. Please know that I recognize

that potential, and my logical mind would completely agree. But the "metaphysical" side of my mind is quite conflicted, and I simply can't allow myself to declare this memory as either real or imagined. It seems weirder than either.

I'll also add that I never looked in the yard for any evidence. It would have been very easy to just walk outside and look for footprints in the snow, but I didn't. At the time I forthrightly dismissed it as a dream, so why would I bother?

Text added Nov. 2018:

I don't know how many times I've told the story of seeing the five beings out my window; certainly many hundreds. I wrote this essay as a sort of diary entry back in 2003 (nine years after the event), and I feel I've remained true to this earliest writing.

When I tell the story now, I've been saying this about the moment I saw the beings:

I heard a voice in my head, it may have been my own voice, but this is how I remember it. It said, "*Oh yes, they're here, now is the time to put your head on the pillow and shut down*."

This feels very accurate, but here's what I wrote in 2003:

I calmly thought to myself, "*Oh yes, they're here, let's just shut down and black out.*"

That's close to what I've been saying, but not quite the same thing. Reading both now, I'm not sure what to think.

I did a hypnosis session in 2007 with Budd Hopkins. We looked at several events but very little new information came up. He took me back to the night in Maine when I saw the five beings out my window. What emerged was a palpable sense of knowing, a distinct feeling of familiarity. It was like, "Oh yes, they're here again. It's them, they're back. *It's happening again*."

Under hypnosis it felt like I had seen these beings *many* times, and having them show up like this was perfectly normal—this was nothing unusual. That feeling doesn't make it true, the hypnotic state is dabbling with the unknown, and I am cautious to make any conclusions.

~ ~ ~

In the initial post I wrote that I was depressed when I awoke and saw the beings out my window, and I need to be clear about the intensity of that time. I'd been diagnosed with severe clinical depression in December of 1992, and I was on medication that night in early 1993. I had been suffering terribly, and was lost in suicidal thoughts. I'm amazed I survived.

I've wondered if the beings arrived that night to help me, quite literally —*were they there to save my life?* I don't know, but I need to be careful about making connections where there might not be any. What I can say is that the timing is so exact, that I have to consider this as a possibility.

Deep feelings and blogging

Wednesday, March 25, 2009

This blog has been a very curious thing for me. It's a nervy way to share some extremely personal stuff.

I recently had a psychic reading from a women named Marisa Ryan. She claims to communicate with dead relatives, spirit guides and aliens. Yes—I know how goofy this sounds, but the fact I did this, and actually took it seriously says a lot about my state of mind these days. This is exactly the kind of flighty thing I would have dismissed with contempt just a few years ago.

I sought out something as silly as a psychic, and an expensive one at that. Am I really that needy? I must be, because I eagerly pursued this reading. She told me a bunch of stuff, and a lot of it seemed to resonate as true. Below is a (slightly edited) excerpt from Marissa's reading:

> I'm being told that you are supposed to be journaling all the experiences.
>
> And that means going back to the very first memory you have, you need to be journaling. I feel like it's important for you to re-experience them… What was your mood that you can remember? And then what was your experience, and completely describe every bit of it. And how did you feel at that time, meaning was there any communication? Did you have anxiety? Did you have fear? Did you love it? Did you feel at peace? Every little thing that you can sense, use all your senses. Did you smell anything? Did you see anything, did you hear anything?
>
> Write it all down. And then write down how do you feel about that now. And you are supposed to go through each experience. I'm being told that you are going to write a book, if you haven't started already.
>
> It's not necessarily for education purposes, it's just because there are more and more people waking up that have had these experiences, like you, and they feel like they are crazy, or like they are nuts. And even though there are millions of cases out there, there are still new people waking up that are saying, "I don't believe in this?" Or, "Why is this happening to me?" And you will bring peace to them.

One of the first thing she said to me, and she repeated it over and over, was: *you are supposed to be journaling*.

I laughed when she said this, because right at that time I was compulsively writing and posting my experiences on this blog. She didn't know anything about my weird commitment to journaling. There is a lot of backlogged stuff,

and if I’m brave enough those stories will make their way into this very public forum.

A few days later I spoke with a close friend in Germany, Natascha, and she had been reading my blog. She has shown herself to be quite a skilled intuitive, and I trust her insights. I was proud of myself for posting these stories. It felt bold and I expected some praise, but she was quick to point out I was being too superficial.

She told me my text was void of sentiment—that I wasn’t sharing enough about what I was feeling, about my deeper emotions. She told me, in essence, exactly what Marisa had told me.

I feel like I’ve taken a bold plunge into the deep end of the pool, and now the psychics are telling me to go deeper.

2

EARLY POSTS

Strings of coincidence can strengthen us in the determination to follow our deepest intuitions even when they run counter to conventional wisdom and logic and cannot be subjected to rational explanation.

—Robert Moss

Neuron-like nature of the internet

Thursday, April 9, 2009

I experienced a tiny little dose of the divine in a coffee shop in Moab, Utah.

The other night I slept out in the desert under the stars. I was a few miles outside of Moab, along a lovely stretch of highway that runs parallel to the Colorado River.

Sometimes when I sleep outside I'll experience the most vivid dreams, and I've recently been trying to encourage some extra advice from the great beyond as I sleep. So as I zipped up my sleeping bag below the sandstone cliffs, *I told the universe I was receptive, and asked it to give me some insight*. Alas, I awoke without remembering any dreams.

Later that morning, I drove back into town and went to a coffee shop on main street. I pulled out my laptop, logged onto the wifi, and went on Wikipedia (a resource I rarely use), to look up 'Moab' for any mythic significance. Before typing anything, I saw the featured article of the day was about highway 128 in Utah—*where I'd slept the night before*.

That was odd.

Now, this coincidence is curious, true enough. In the previous days I had been composing a blog post in my head about the neuron-like nature of the internet, and the possibility that it might be developing its own self-awareness. And then I get a very curious cyber-synchronicity linked to where I'd slept, and where I'd asked for an insight.

Are we witnessing a new form of collective consciousness within the internet? There's now a global expanse of electronic brain neurons running everywhere—and maybe even in the psyche of individuals. We are submerged in an unfamiliar digital zeitgeist.

Is there an evolving giant life form of synaptic fibers emerging within cyberspace? Is it a new set of neurotransmitters, allowing and encouraging an alternative web of synchronistic happenings?

I recently tried (and succeeded) to poach a wireless signal at a friend's apartment in Brooklyn, and was amazed to see a ridiculously long list of available internet connections. It was bizarre.

This is a new chapter of human history, nothing like this has EVER

happened before. We are surrounded by a swirling electro-magnetic soup with wi-fi portals, cell-phone towers and satellites in space. I am somehow forced to imagine billions of devout monks all chanting together, resonating collectively.

What is unfolding?

There is something significant in a carefully shuffled deck of Tarot cards, and the I Ching is an ancient a system of divination within a random set of 64 abstract line arrangements.

Why is the internet any different?

Here's a little bit more. Below is an excerpt from a comrade, Michael MacDonald, from his blog *Paranormal Musings*:

> This is no joke. Today Ian and I went to Forrest Lawn Cemetery to pay our respects to Forry Ackerman, who died Dec. 4. Next we... arrived at our hotel. When I sat down and logged into the computer, Facebook required the typical security typographical entry before letting me see my mail. To my total astonishment, the words I was prompted to type were, "Ackerman 000" I kid you not.

Extra text added in 2019:

This essay, barely ten years old, reads like a time piece from another era. In 2009 the internet was relatively new, and my thoughts about this budding technology were tinged with paranoia. Yet I stand by my statements, they are still valid—perhaps even more so now.

Seeing a white lion

Friday, April 17, 2009

During the spring of 2005, my friend Ned and I spent part of the afternoon at an outcropping of small boulders near my home in rural Idaho. We were bouldering on these rocks as a way to get in shape for the upcoming summer climbing season. The long row of boulders is situated on a small hill above a dirt road. The spot is quite lovely, with sweeping views of the snow covered peaks of the Tetons. The long winter had ended, the sunshine felt warm, and everything smelled of sage.

The act of traversing on these steep rock formations proved to be quite a wake up call. Both of us were surprised at how weak and sore we were after a half hour of bouldering.

We sat on a big flat rock above the road and lamented our exhausted forearms. I remember saying, “I need to *get strong*. This is the summer for it.” And Ned agreed.

Then I saw what I thought was a dog on the dirt road below us. It was a ways off, and there was something odd about it.

I pointed and said, “Look, there’s somebody’s dog.”

It took only a moment to realize that its slow lanky movements looked more like the stride of a cat. Within seconds, both of us knew this was no dog —this was a mountain lion.

We watched silently as the lion walked along the road downhill from where we sat. It never saw us. We were transfixed as the cat calmly plodded past, watching it for about five minutes. It was rather small, no bigger than a golden retriever. It was almost completely white, except for a black spot on the tip of its long tail and distinctive dark “tear stains” under its eyes.

We sat in silent amazement as it passed us, less than thirty feet away.

It walked unhurried down the road, then stopped. It looked ahead, sensed something and smoothly slipped into the bushes. A moment later we heard a car coming down the road and after it drove past, the lion came back out and continued walking.

It ambled away from us on the road for a few more minutes. Eventually it stepped off the road, leisurely entered into the tall grass and trees, and we lost

sight of it.

This was quite a sighting.

People live out west their whole lives and never catch a glimpse of a lion. We had a close up sighting on a beautiful day. The whole thing was magical, and we both felt enormously fortunate. When I got home, I wrote up a short email about the experience and sent it off to handful of friends.

I got a reply from an email pal in New Zealand named Ivan. He scanned a page from a book on spirit animals and sent it to me. I'll add that Ivan is an amazing fellow, and has written two books he claims are channeled directly from God. The text of the scanned page explained that, "seeing a Lion is an important sign that it is time *to get strong.*"

My first impression was that this meant some kind of spiritual strength. It was a few days later when I realized that both myself and Ned were telling each other that "*We need to get strong*" at the exact moment we saw the Lion.

Text added April 2009:

I was asked a question in a comment below this post. The question came from one of my most dedicated readers, *Red Pill Junkie*: "Looking in retrospect, did something happen during that year, or these last four years, that proved this announcement to 'get strong' was a sage warning?"

That's a good question.

I hadn't ever thought about it, but the events of my life seemed to change direction sometime around 2005. This would have been exactly four years ago, and it was about that time when I began to focus much more on paranormal stuff. These years have been an evolution of sorts, with some bold jumps forward. It's also been difficult, especially the last two years. I've been dealing with a lot of hard personal challenges, and this blog is part of that "dealing."

Perhaps this lion was a sage warning for me get stronger for the times ahead.

Also, NED is DEN spelled backwards. This is probably nothing it all, but sadly it's how my brain works.

The shiny red balloon

Saturday, May 2, 2009

I had just gotten a cup of coffee and a pastry at a crowded Starbucks in the lobby of a tacky casino in Laughlin Nevada. I needed a place to sit, and saw a woman sitting alone at a small table with an empty chair. I asked if it would be okay if I joined her, and she nodded yes. I thanked her, sat down and sipped my coffee.

This was the first morning of an eight day UFO conference in February of 2008. We were both wearing name tags, and were obviously here for the same event. Neither one of us said anything—she was busy on her laptop and I was getting mine out of my book bag.

The table wasn't very big, so it ended up being a bit cramped. I checked my email and ate the pastry. As I was chewing the last bite, I saw she was looking at me with a strange expression. I think we stared at each other for a long moment before she said, "You just ate my bear claw."

I wasn't sure what she meant, I looked in my book bag and realized I still had my bear claw in a brown paper bag. She was right, I thought it was mine when I saw it on the table.

I apologized, and gave her my pastry. We started talking, and she told me her name was Natascha and that she'd come from Germany for the conference. We drank coffee and talked about the strange scene at the conference.

We ended up meeting at that Starbucks over the next few mornings, and were soon sitting together during the presentations. By the end of the conference, we were spending almost all of our time together.

Prior to the conference, Natascha had no interest in the UFO phenomenon, and how she ended up in Nevada is a curious story. She was told by an astrologer to travel from Germany all the way to Las Vegas to attend this eight day event, so she did. It proved to be the start of new chapter of her life; she realized that somehow, this subject was important.

On the final day after the conference had officially ended, she was planning to take a shuttle van to the Las Vegas airport for her flight home. I offered to drive her there, and we spent our final hour in the casino at the

same Starbucks, saying goodbye to the friends we'd met. It was close to noon when we got in my little Subaru, and started the drive north.

The drive out of Laughlin is pretty bleak. The highway runs through a barren stretch of desert, and this created a surreal mood after being cooped up in the casino for over a week. Natascha had her iPod, and she played some music from two of her friends in Germany. It was a haunting series of tones created by a man rubbing crystal bowls and a woman singing. Less than a year later I had dinner with this same couple, but that's another story.

It was about an hour's drive to the Las Vegas airport. We talked as I drove, and tried to make sense of the of our time together at the conference. It was actually a sad time in the car, because we'd become quite close.

We were both hungry, and since there was plenty of time before the flight had decided to find someplace to eat. We're both rather health conscious vegetarians, and the food at the casino was dreadful, so we were on the lookout for anything more to our tastes. We were heading into the outskirts of Las Vegas, and I was doubtful we'd find much that would fit our needs.

We were zipping along the freeway when we passed a Whole Foods grocery store, so I got off at the next exit and doubled back. Within a few minutes, we were pulling into the parking lot of a strip mall and parked my car.

We got out and stood up. I looked across the roof of the car, and Natascha was standing there with a curious expression on her face—and she was holding a shiny red balloon. I walked around to her side of the car, and she seemed a little perplexed. Without saying anything, she handed me the heart shaped balloon with the words I LOVE YOU on it. I was confused—she definitely didn't have the balloon in the car during the drive, so I didn't understand where it came from.

I took the balloon and gently set it in the car, closed the door, and we went into the grocery store together.

We never mentioned the balloon.

Our lunch together was very nice. We ate salad and fruit in the deli, and she also got some food for the flight home (mostly chocolate), and I got some food for my long drive back to Idaho (mostly chocolate).

We arrived the airport, and I walked her up to the security gate and we said our good-byes. It was an emotional farewell, and there were some tears. I walked out of the airport feeling sad and confused.

I spent the next 16 hours driving with a shiny red balloon on the passenger seat, with the words I LOVE YOU staring up at me.

I got home, and called her on Skype the next day. Early in the conversation I asked: “Natascha, where did that balloon come from?”

She paused and then said, “I don’t know.”

We were both perplexed, and I pressed her on it.

She finally said, “I’m not sure, but I think it was just there when I opened the door of the car and I picked it up.”

I met Natascha over a year ago, in February of 2008. Since her return to Germany, we’ve spoken almost weekly (and sometimes daily) either on the phone or via Skype. These conversations have been very deep in a way that seems to help me, a lot. I don’t quite know what to make of our relationship.

I feel like I’ve met a true soul mate.

A shared pattern?

Tuesday, June 2, 2009

Over a year ago (February 2008) I was in Laughlin Nevada attending the annual UFO conference. At the time, I was actively involved with the production of a documentary on the alien abduction phenomenon. My story and foggy memories are featured prominently in the footage. Alas, the project has been on hold for a year now.

During the 8-day conference I sat and watched a presentation by Dolores Cannon, a hypnotherapist and UFO investigator for over twenty years. I found her presentation quite intriguing, and was bewildered by her findings. She has been receiving fascinating information through her hypnosis subjects. She described taking her patients to the deepest levels of the subconscious, and in doing so, a different voice would emerge. She spoke of ongoing communication from alien spirits in other dimensions that speak to her during hypnosis sessions, and she's written a series of books featuring these communications.

Midway through her talk, she described a recurring theme in her research. She'd recounted a pattern with a specific set of similarities; men in their mid-40s who've had UFO encounters in the 1970s and have also experienced depressive episodes in their 30s. These people are now coming forward with their stories in a very dramatic way.

I sat there in the audience and recognized the pattern. *That was ME, and I knew it*.

I fit the checklist. I was 45 at the time (born in 1962), I saw a very vivid UFO in the nighttime sky in 1974, and had a missing time event that same year. I spent my early 30s dealing with clinical depression, and I'm involved in a documentary on the UFO abduction phenomenon where I speak openly about my memories.

When I heard Dolores say these men, "are coming forward with their stories in a very dramatic way," I felt my heart sink. My involvement with the documentary certainly seemed to fit the definition of dramatic.

After the presentation, I went up to talk with Dolores at her book signing table. She's a very sweet grandmotherly character, and very approachable. I

said hello, then asked her about that “pattern” of men she described during her presentation.

She was strangely dismissive, and seemed to evade my question. This took me by surprise so I pressed her a little bit, but her reaction made me uncomfortable. I awkwardly backed away—I was embarrassed, but didn’t know why.

I was haunted by what she’d said on stage, and her odd reaction to my question. Something bugged me about it, and from that point on I kept a lookout for anyone else who might fit that pattern.

In October of that same year (2008), I attended another conference in New Jersey. It had been organized by Jeremy Vaeni and a crew of east-coast experiencers, and the event was called *The Culture of Contact*.

During my time there I met David Biedny, one of the hosts of an excellent podcast called *The Paracast*. I listened to the show, and recognized David’s voice in the small crowd. We talked and shared some stories. I was very familiar with his paranormal experiences, because he’d shared some of them on his show. I’d also guessed that we were around the same age. I told him about the Dolores Cannon presentation, and the “pattern” she’d described.

David was 46, the same age as me, and he’d had a dramatic UFO sighting in Venezuela in 1974. He also has a history of depression and, was coming forward in a dramatic way by sharing his stories on his podcast.

I asked him when he became inspired to do the audio program. He replied, “About two and a half years ago.”

This matched the timeline when I was inspired to take part in the documentary. We both told curious stories about the synchronicities that marked the genesis of our separate projects. The timing of some of our life experiences seemed to match, and we both recognized this was strange.

A little while later at that same conference, we all went into the main theater to watch a documentary. The lights went down, and for the next 90 minutes I sat in the dark watching a very insightful overview of the UFO abduction phenomenon.

As the film unfolded, I recognized something odd—this film was *exactly* the premise of my documentary project. I’d given to the producer my 2-page proposal in 2006, describing my vision for the film. Later, the producer convinced me to change the focus of the project, he was adamant that the narrative of the film should focus on me and my memories, which is another

a story for a future posting.

What I'd just seen looked as if it had been created using the bulleted points from my original proposal from 2006. Here is an excerpt from that document:

> The vision of this project would be to avoid any temptation to present the people involved within the framework of a scary movie. The presentation should be serious and respectful to the subjects, they should tell their story in the full light of day. The narrative must unfold with the idea that *something* is happening, and to simply let people tell their story.

This matched the tone of the documentary I had watched at the conference. I was enormously impressed, and the film managed to include a lot of information not normally covered in the exploitative UFO stuff on late night cable TV.

The documentary ended, and the theater lights came on. I was shocked, the documentary was an hour and a half long, but it felt like barely 15 minutes.

I went into the lobby, and saw the filmmaker (I'll call him Joe, not his real name). Some of my social niceties had faded away, and I went right up to him. After introducing myself, I simply blurted out some questions.

I asked, "How old are you?"

Joe replied, "47."

"Have you had any of your own experiences with this phenomenon?"

"Oh yes."

"Any history of depression?"

"Yes."

Right then, I felt like I had fallen down the rabbit hole.

So, I had just met two men in the same room who matched the "pattern" that Dolores Cannon had described. It was both remarkable, and unnerving. And yes—I realize it was at a UFO conference, but something was still nagging at me about what she'd said at the presentation in Laughlin. It bugged me, and I needed an answer.

In January of this year (2009), I went online and found the DVD of her presentation at the Laughlin UFO conferences. I put $19.95 on my credit card, and a week later the disc arrived in my mailbox. I opened the envelope, put it in my DVD player and watched all 90 minutes of it. And then I watched it again.

And—*she NEVER says it*.

Huh? Okay, this wigged me out. She does NOT tell of the pattern I vividly remember her saying. She does describe other patterns, but nothing that matches what I recalled.

Oh jeeez, what do I make of this?

The DVD is definitely the *same* presentation I'd seen in Laughlin. As far as I can tell, no dialogue was edited out, and I recognized people in the audience who had asked questions at the end. This was, most assuredly, from the exact same 2008 conference.

Am I insane? I've repeatedly asked myself that question, and I'm not sure how to answer it.

I went up to her at her table within minutes of her presentation and asked very specific questions, so this wasn't a result of my memories changing over the year. I clearly remember what she'd said on that stage, and I clearly remember asking her about it afterwards—yet she *never* said it.

The story continues.

Within the first week of starting my blog, I began corresponding with fellow blogger Michael MacDonald. Beyond our first names, we share a curious list of similarities. We both have beautiful Scottish last names, and were both born in 1962.

Unlike the others in this group, Michael hasn't suffered from depression.

Both of us are involved with a documentary project on the subject of UFO abductions. His film *Intruders* is completed, but mine is on hold. We were working on them at the same time, and we've both interviewed Budd Hopkins, Dave Jacobs and Leo Sprinkle. When he described his film during our phone conversation, I laughed aloud because the similarities with my project were sort of ridiculous.

His blog is titled *Paranormal Musings*, and he writes about his personal synchronicities. But here's the weirdest thing—we started our blogs within 24 hours of each other!

I wrote a post about the funny similarities between Michael and myself titled *Comrades*, and less than 24 hours later I received a comment from a fellow named Dan.

His note began, "I must say I'm LITERALLY shaking from the synchronicity."

Dan recognized himself in the pattern, and went on to list nearly the same points on the checklist as myself and Michael—he's 47 years old (born nine months before me), he's had bouts of mild depression, he started a documentary project on abduction researcher Barbara Lamb, he's planning a podcast interviewing abductees, he's had ongoing experiences that imply UFO contact events—and he has a beautiful Scottish last name.

He wrote, "It certainly seems like the aliens are guilty of programming a select few of us to act." He was saying exactly what I'd been thinking.

Okay—I'm trying to keep this all clear, not just to you the reader, but to myself. In less than a year I've met four people, each who fit that elusive Dolores Cannon checklist, a list spoken only in my imagination. I clearly heard her, but she never said it.

Somehow this defined pattern entered my memory through a cute grandmother who channels information from alien spirits in other dimensions.

I share a bunch of similarities with these five men. I feel like I should make up some sort of flow chart to try and quantify and list the weird overlapping of identical factors.

I recently told this (long winded) story to two pals in a tent in Alaska. At the end I asked, "Does this seem weird to you? Because it seems weird to me." They both treated me as ridiculous that I would even ask that question.

* David - Age 46, began podcasting about his experiences in 2007, worked in the film industry, he had a vivid UFO sighting in 1974, life-long experiencer of high-strangeness, history of depression.

* "Joe" - Age 47, directed a documentary on the alien abduction phenomenon in 2007, life-long experiencer, history of depression.

* Michael - Age 47, (born 1962) directed a documentary on alien abduction in 2007, began a paranormal focused blog in March 2009, life-long paranormal events, beautiful Scottish last name.

* Dan - Age 47, (born 1962) began a documentary project on abduction researcher Barbara Lamb in 2008, beginning a pod-cast in 2009 interviewing abductees, on-going contact events, history of depression,

beautiful Scottish last name.

* Mike Clelland (myself) - Age 46, (born 1962) began a documentary on alien abduction in 2007, began a paranormal focused blog in March 2009, on-going paranormal events, a vivid UFO sighting in 1974, history of clinical depression. Beautiful Scottish last name.

Text added Dec. 2018:

I have been keeping an on-going list of people who fit this pattern—born within a year of 1962 and who've come forward with their experiences. I really haven't been digging to find them, they just seem to appear as I proceed forward into other parts of my research. Presently, this list includes 58 people.

The universe answers my plea

Friday, July 31, 2009

I'm in the midst of a very curious event, and I'm posting it right now, as it's unfolding.

I've been searching for answers, and something that seems to provide some insight involves me sleeping out under the stars. I've been going out into the mountains, alone, with the sole intent of asking the Universe for help. Yes, I know this sounds corny, but please keep reading.

Before I fall asleep, I lay in my sleeping bag and ask for help out loud. I do this periodically, and almost always get some sort of curious reply. It started in the form of VERY vivid dreams, and most of these are posted on this blog. Sometimes I'll wake up, no dreams, nothing curious at all, but before noon some other synchronistic event will arrive that seems to match my questioning. The post titled: *the neuron-like nature of the internet* is a good example, and it adds a deeper layer to this story.

Lately I've been bringing a tiny hand held voice recorder with me into the mountains. I can record my appeal to the Universe before falling asleep, and can record any dreams when I wake up.

Two days ago on Wednesday, July 29, I hiked into the Tetons alone. I live close by, and can get into the mountains quickly. I left my cabin in the afternoon, walked until it got dark, then set my sleeping bag out on the ground. I know the weather around here, and I'll rarely set up a shelter.

Recently (and it's an ongoing theme in this blog) I've been feeling lost and adrift. I've been trying to articulate my insecurities about what I'm dealing with, and its implications. It's created a form of fatigue that's oppressive and confusing, and I'm tired of it. I want some answers.

I rehearsed my speech while hiking into the mountains. I tried to formalize my appeal, and at the same time I tried to surrender. I spoke aloud as I walked. Is this prayer? I guess, maybe.

At about 10,000 feet above sea level, I left the forest and crossed into the alpine zone. I was now above tree-line, and the terrain was open and lovely. At this point I left the trail and made my way across the stunted grass and wildflowers. The off-trail travel was easy, and the sense of freedom

magnified.

The landscape funneled me east, and I kept walking. I worked my way up a steep slope, scrambling through the loose rocks. I wanted to stand on top of an unnamed peak that was hidden from my view, but was obvious on the map. I knew it would be dark long before the summit, but I kept going. I love this environment, and felt comfortable climbing higher.

The sun was setting as I found an area just big enough to set my sleeping bag down, a little ledge of sorts, tucked in next to a gnarled clump of sub-alpine fir. There was a trickling spring nearby, and I was provided with a spectacular view of a canyon that rarely sees visitors. I was perched above it all on a small platform of granite, the sun was setting in a blaze of orange, and a half moon was rising over the ridge behind me. It was about 9:30 when I settled into my home for the night.

I ate a little something, brushed my teeth, arranged my pad and climbed into my sleeping bag. Before zipping myself in, I spoke into my little digital audio recorder. Here's a transcript of the 1:36 audio of my plea:

> It's about ten o'clock. I'm at about ten thousand feet. There's a beautiful half moon. I've got a little trickle of a stream here. I'm on a nice rocky outcropping, on a nice flat spot. It is lovely beyond all comprehension. And I want to declare to the universe that I'm ready for some sort of confirmation—if this is real, or if this isn't. I used to say "don't make it scary," but I don't know what to say anymore. I would prefer that it not be scary, but I'm tired and fatigued—*of not knowing*. If it comes to me in the form of a dream, then that's okay.
>
> Any little clue that can help, so I can help others. I think I will be able to help others if I'm a little more centered myself, or have a little more confirmation. I really care about my role on this planet, and I wish I could do more. I'm just so fatigued, and I'm tired of it. I want it to end. I know I can do more.
>
> Thank you so much.

Yes, I recognize how perfectly mushy and new-agey I sound, but this reflects exactly my deepest feeling in that moment. I woke up the next morning just a little before dawn. No dreams, nothing.

I packed up my gear and quietly made my way uphill in the calm blue-gray light. Moments later, I saw a pine martin in the rocks, a member of the weasel family, although it looks more like a cat. It playfully scampered ahead of me, occasionally turning around to look at me with curiosity. It eventually trotted off, and I felt blessed to have such a lovely sighting.

I hiked along a really pretty ridge system as the sun came up, and climbed

the peak I'd seen on the map. I was only on the summit for a moment, then I turned around and started downhill. I was walking south when I rejoined the trail, then made my way back to my car.

I got to the parking lot at about noon, then arrived back to my house by about one in the afternoon.

I open my email, and my heart stopped. There, on my screen, was a Facebook friend request from Mike Lewis (a pseudonym for privacy).

Okay, let me fill you in. Mike Lewis was with me in 1974 when we walked home on a Friday night from a high school football game, and if my memory is correct, at about 9:30 in the evening we saw a strange orange flash in the sky. I arrived home at about 11:30, and as best as I can figure, we lost about two hours of time. That story is told in the post: *orange flash and missing time*.

I've been searching for Mike Lewis for the last three years.

Unfortunately, there are a lot of people with this very common name, and I've been too afraid to continue. The last time we saw each other was probably 29 years ago at our high school graduation in 1980.

The email from Mike Lewis arrived at 9:38 p.m., quite possibly the exact moment I made my emotional plea into that little recorder from my sleeping bag. I asked the universe for help, and it answered.

This mirrors the single most important story on this blog—the events surrounding Cindy Gail, and her reappearance in my life.

These two stories parallel each other in ways that leave me astonished—seeing that orange flash with Mike in Cindy's front yard, the Facebook friend request, the exactness of the time, and both were an overt response to my own dilemma. I made a needy plea the moment Mike contacted me, and I declared I wasn't brave the moment Cindy contacted me.

I'm freaked out. This has been so hard, and it feels like I'm suffocating. Why can't this feel peaceful and fun?

I know I'll need to confirm Mike's friend request, but I'm frozen and scared.

More soon.

Text added Sept. 2009

I've now replied to the friend request from Mike Lewis. I had a film crew in the room as I sent the note. We've since sent a few short messages back

and forth, all simple pleasantries. There will be a day when I ask him about that night in 1974, but it hasn't happened yet.

Text added June 2019:

I just got off the phone with Mike Lewis. I've been wanting to call him for a decade, and I finally did it. I asked him about that night in 1974, and he said he doesn't remember anything. He does remember that I got in trouble for coming home late, but nothing about an orange light or missing time.

This book was totally completed about a week ago, but I couldn't publish it without asking him the question that has been on my mind for nearly 45 years. I'd built a wall of fear around contacting him, and almost didn't dial the phone.

I'm not sure how much weight to give his response. Within the UFO literature, it's common that witnesses won't talk about a sighting after it happens, and often one person will remember something while the other won't. Having said that, I feel strongly that I've accurately described my own memories of that night.

When I went to bed last night, I knew we would talk today. I awoke to the hooting of several barred owls around the house—their calls were eerie and loud. It was 3:30 a.m. when I first heard them, and I listened for the next half hour or so. I fell asleep and had a dream where Mike and I stood on the same street where the orange flash took place, and he said that he remembered seeing a thin line in the night sky. He gestured with his finger above his head, and made a straight line about two feet long.

My call to Mike was much easier than I'd built it up to be. I confronted a hurdle in my life, and it was a nice lesson for facing the next one.

Thoughts on a documentary on hold

Sunday, August 2, 2009

Introductory text added Nov. 2018:
In 2009 I sat at my desk and spoke into a microphone. I described the genesis of a documentary project, and how it eventually fizzled out. I went back and listened to it again for this book—it was tough to hear so much confusion in my voice from nine years ago. I've come a long way.

I wrote an essay using the audio as reference. It's not a direct transcript, that would have been unbearably long, but it tells the story.

~ ~ ~

I've been working on a documentary about UFO contact. It's an important part of my overall story, but I haven't said much about it here on the blog. Writing about it has been daunting, because the story is somewhat complicated. I type slow and talk fast, so it was easier to record my thoughts as audio. It's 28 minutes long and you can listen to it here.

When I tell people I'm involved with this documentary, they'll ask how I'm involved. I'll reply that I'm the "fact checker," and that's sort of a joke, but essentially true.

I've been working closely with the producer, Stephen. In the early stages of the project we worked long distance with the director, Tanya, who was in New York.

I met Stephen in the autumn of 2006. Most days of the week, I'd eat lunch at the same little restaurant on main street. I was doing freelance work at home and needed a break from the desk, so going to town for lunch was easy.

I was friends with the woman who owned the restaurant, and we would often talk about movies. I asked if she'd seen anything good recently, and she said she'd been watching Ingmar Bergman movies on Netflix and thought they looked beautiful. I'd been to film school, so I nodded and said, "Sven Nykvist."

She didn't know what I was talking about, and I explained that he was the director of photography for many of Bergman's greatest movies. Then I

added that no one else in Driggs, Idaho would know that besides me.

She pointed across the room and said, “He’ll know.”

I was skeptical. She walked over to his table and started talking to him. Her back was to me, but I could see his expression as they spoke. They were on the other side of the restaurant and I couldn’t hear them, but I could read his lips when he said, “Sven Nykvist.”

I went over and introduced myself, and that’s how we met.

I’d recently signed up for Netflix and ended up watching a lot of documentaries on UFOs. Most of them were terrible.

At some point, I got it in my mind that I needed to make my own documentary about the UFO abduction phenomenon. There was a point in the 1980s when I worked on film crews doing TV commercials, and thought how hard could it be? With the advent of low-cost video equipment and desktop editing, it seemed entirely possible.

Stephen and I would occasionally sit together for lunch, and I tried to sell him on the idea of a documentary on UFO abduction. He seemed interested, but wasn’t quite buying.

One night I was all wound up after watching a crummy UFO documentary on Netflix. Even though it was late, I sat down at my computer and quickly wrote a two page treatment. I was anxious, and needed to describe the documentary I had in my mind.

My main point was that the subject should be taken seriously. There should be no giggle factor, no haunted house music, and no corny reenactments. Instead, it should focus on the people and their experiences.

There would be a need to interview both researchers and those who claim the first hand contact experience. These people should simply tell their stories, and not much more than that.

I typed it up and sent it off to Stephen. I read his reply the next morning when I opened my email. He said, “Okay let’s do it.”

Reading his reply came with a sinking feeling. The phrase, “Be careful what you wish for,” rang in my head.

We started right then. This would’ve been early in the winter of 2006. Stephen began looking into the production, things like cameras and equipment, and I began putting together the content, calling up abduction researchers and arranging interviews.

At one point that winter we drove over Teton Pass to Jackson Hole,

Wyoming. We were meeting with a cameraman named Peter at a restaurant. He'd done a lot of documentary work, but what surprised us both was that he seemed extremely knowledgeable about UFOs. He had read a bunch of books on the subject, and recognized the need for a good documentary.

Stephen and Peter went back and forth in their conversation, both agreeing they didn't want to do a standard journalistic treatment of the subject. I mostly sat and listened. I'd worked in the film industry decades earlier and had many similar discussions, so it was very nostalgic.

I agreed that we should do something different than the standard fare. The term "narrative flow" was used a lot, as a way to describe pulling the viewer along. They were eager to tell more than just a compelling story—they wanted *a journey*.

We finished our lunch, got in my car, and began the 45 minute drive back home. I was driving and listened as Stephen mused about doing something more with the documentary format, and at one point I sort of interjected, "Well, I don't know if this is important or not, but I saw a UFO with my friend Kenny when I was about 12 years old."

I was actually sort of embarrassed that I'd said anything, it just seemed like it wasn't important. This was the first time I'd shared any of this stuff, even though we'd been talking about the project for months. Stephen looked at me and said go on.

I added, "There was this other time when I was walking home from a high school football game, and a friend and I saw a jarring bright orange flash, and when I arrived home my parents were angry at me that I was out so late and I didn't understand why. I think there was maybe two hours of missing time."

He didn't say anything, but I could see he was paying very close attention.

I went on to say, "I also have another memory which is sort of fleeting. It happened in the winter of 1993. I woke up in the middle of the night because of a bright light shining in my bedroom window. When I looked outside there were five spindly gray aliens walking towards the house."

After I told him that, he gave me this look. I felt like a wounded gazelle on the plains of Africa, and he was a drooling hyena circling me, and licking his lips.

He said, "*We've found our journey*."

I knew what he was implying, and after a long pause I said, "No—Fucking—Way."

He said, “No, this is good.”

I said, “There is no way, absolutely not. I’m not brave enough. It ain’t gonna happen.”

I dropped him off where he had parked his car, and we stood and talked for few minutes in the cold.

He told me, “This is interesting, this is something I want to pursue.

Stephen called me that night and told me that he’d talked it over with his wife, his script writing partner. He said, “We want to do this. This is very interesting. We both feel that this could be an impressive documentary.”

Again I said, “No way, I’m not brave enough.”

He said, “I’m going to let you think about it. I’ll a give you some time, and then I’m going to call you back.”

After that I didn’t hear from him for nearly a month, and during this time I thought about it—a lot. I recognized he was right, this could be a very interesting story.

What intrigued Stephen was that I’d never looked into my own experiences, and he thought it could be fascinating to document the process as I tried to uncover what might have happened.

I also realized that I didn’t want to be the subject of a documentary. I was confiding in a few friends and asking their advice, but there wasn’t much they could say. This was a difficult time, I was anxious and conflicted—and then I had a dream.

The dream begins in a classroom, and it feels like high school. For some reason everything is yellow, like the sets have all been painted the same color. The teacher passes out a little book to each student. It’s a sort of tourist guide for traveling in South America, it has maps, pictures, lists of destinations, and descriptions of things to do.

She tells the class, “Here’s your assignment. You have to write about an adventure using this guidebook as your source. Pick a town or a location, and write about an adventure you could have there.”

Hearing this, I got really emotional. I was suddenly completely enraged, and totally passionate. I stood up and made this dramatic ‘William Shatner’ speech. I declared, “You cannot have an adventure out of a book! You cannot have an adventure off a map! (12:34 time count on the audio) *You have to leave the map!* You need to walk away from the map to have an adventure!”

I was monumentally distraught, and stormed out of the classroom. I ended

up in an apartment, it was my home and it felt like I was back in New York City. Like the school, the apartment and the furniture were all yellow. It had a dreamlike quality to it, but at the same time it was very realistic.

At this point in the dream, I was so angry that I need to leave. I thought to myself, “Wait, I don’t even know *how* to leave. What should I do?”

And then I remembered I have a map that shows how to get out of town, and it was in a drawer. So I opened the drawer and there’s an envelope inside. I opened the envelope, and I pulled out a single picture. It was a photograph of a friend named Porter.

And then I woke up. I didn’t ease out of sleep, I was suddenly wide awake and staring at the ceiling.

Porter is a friend of mine in the small town where I live, and he’d been seriously injured in a car accident. He lost the use of his legs, and he’ll probably be in a wheelchair for the rest of his life. There’s a lot to this story, and it’s very dark, more than I can share here. Yet Porter is an amazing, powerful, optimistic man.

I laid there in bed, fully aware of the symbolism in the dream. Nothing about it was hidden, it was completely transparent—this dream was all about the documentary.

I’d been reading a lot of Joseph Campbell at the time, and this tied into my passionate speech in the classroom. I declared, “To truly have an adventure means you had to leave the map!”

Campbell would often make reference to the Arthurian legends, and how the Knights of The Round Table all felt the need to have an adventure. They each went alone into the darkest part of the forest where there was no trail. This is what I meant when I declared, “You cannot have an adventure out of a book.”

For me, this defined the documentary. For an adventure to be real, you need to leave the well worn path, and enter the darkness.

I’m still confused about the picture of Porter. If there is any meaning for me, it feels like there are no guarantees in life. Something could happen that might change everything.

The dream was extremely vivid and cinematic, and the colors and mood were highly charged. It was very clear, as was the message.

I live in a cabin and sleep in a loft. I got up and climbed down the ladder, and as my feet touched the floor, the phone rang. It was Stephen, and got

right to the point, “I’m tired of waiting. What’s it going to be yes or no?”

I said yes.

We started on the project. I’d shared three stories with Steven: the UFO sighting, the missing time event, and seeing the five beings outside my window. These three experiences were essential to the production, but I was dismissive that my memories were real—yet we still proceeded forward.

We put together a little team and drove to Laramie, Wyoming to interview Dr. Leo Sprinkle. We flew to New York to interview Budd Hopkins, and David Jacobs in Philadelphia. I was nervous during the interviews; I’m not very charismatic on camera, and feel like I came across as uncomfortable.

The way we conducted the interviews was to shoot for about an hour, getting the standard introductory story out of the way.

They would talk about their research, then they’d turn the tables and interview me. This is when it got interesting, and it made for good filmmaking. Things got much more engaging.

At first I was very self-conscious, and told Budd, “I’m worried I’m wasting your time.” I said that a few times, and it was awkward.

But we pressed on. David Jacobs asked some questions that really scared me, during an on-camera interview—he was very straight, and he wasn’t letting me worm my way out of the implications.

It was no longer a light project, it became emotional.

We all went down to the Laughlin UFO conference in 2008. At that point I was visibly anxious, and everyone involved saw that. The documentary project just seemed to slow down, then came to a stop. We have about 40 hours of footage and much of it is very good, yet nothing has become of it.

I recorded the audio essay almost a year and a half after the project stalled out, and it’s unfortunate that nothing has come of it.

Someone on the internet accused me of having grand ego issues. He pointed to the documentary project as proof that I was in this for some other reason. Part of why I did the audio essay was to respond to those mean spirited accusations.

It was very strange telling my stories to a camera. Things were buried, and because of the documentary, the floodgates have opened. Now I don’t know how to stop, and realize that at times I’m gushing. I’ve moved on, and now I’m putting all this on the blog, a format where these complex issues can be addressed much more completely.

And things have continued to get weirder. If anyone is reading this blog, you must recognize that some of these experiences are genuinely odd.

Throughout this entire process, I've worked hard to put everything out there—well, nearly everything, I need to keep some things to myself, because some of the other people involved have asked me not to share their stories.

I've worried that I'm delusional, yet I know these things really happened. There's a tension in this, and all I can do is be honest.

I don't know why I'm so driven. Maybe the documentary pushed me off a cliff and now I'm opened up to complete abandonment. I'm terribly confused, but at the same time I've been spending a lot of energy telling my story in the blog in this jumbled up way.

I am doing intense soul-searching, as well as detective work to try and uncover my own experiences—and for a time there was a film crew involved. So I guess I can understand why someone could call it all an ego trip.

I ended the audio by saying, "I feel like the documentary will resurface someday, and I think it has the potential to be interesting. It got a little weird, and I guess I made a commitment to have an adventure, and it was going to be off the map in the darkest part of the forest. I've found myself in that place, and I feel I still need to keep moving forward."

David says what I’m feeling

Monday, August 10, 2009

David Biedny spoke words I could have said myself, and (as usual) he spoke his truth with a better clarity than I could.

The excerpt below is from last night’s *Paracast* at about the 1:45:00 time mark on the two hour podcast (Aug 9, 2009). The episode is linked here.

David shared some stuff I found really moving. I’ve heard him say as much before on other episodes, but this time it really got to me.

Below is a slightly edited transcript from the show. I’ve added the dot-dot-dot thing (...) to show where I’ve removed some extraneous dialogue, and the italics are all mine. Let me make this clear—he was saying *exactly* what I’m feeling. He said:

> When this kind of stuff has intersected with your life—I mean—for so many years I didn’t think about this stuff—for so many years… But it’s not an experience, it’s a whole framework. It’s really odd stuff. Really weird.
>
> So, the point is when this stuff intersects with your reality, at a certain point it kinda reaches an overflow point where you can’t ignore it anymore. So I guess for me, I reached a point where I had been bottling this stuff up—suppressing it—all of it…
>
> I’m bringing this up so that people can have some appreciation for the fact that I’m grappling with this stuff in my life. I mean, this is stuff that I don’t have answers for—I have so many questions—yet I don’t have a lot of understanding for a lot of this stuff.
>
> When Gene was asking me, “Hey, why don’t we do a show about this stuff?” At first I was really hesitant, and then I thought, maybe it’ll feel good to talk about some of this... And I want to talk about these things. Look, maybe at some point I’ll end up regretting all of this, there are times now when I regret it…
>
> But what are you gonna do? I’m in my mid-40s, do I want to suppress this stuff anymore? No.
>
> I think these things have happened to me for some sort of a reason. Now, I could be wrong about that, but I sorta know I’m not. This is where things get murky and complicated… But when you’ve interacted with the unknown in the ways I have, there seems to be some sort of purpose to it. And I don’t pretend to know what the purpose is. I don’t know. We’re talking about ongoing things, so—I don’t know—I have a lot of questions…
>
> We have to talk about these things. Look, someone has to have the rational discourse about this stuff. Someone’s gotta do it.

The Garden

Wednesday, September 2, 2009

I was recently on a short walk in the woods with a friend and her little son. It was a lovely summer morning, and we were in the foothills of Bridger range just outside of Bozeman, Montana. At the end of the walk as the trail neared the parking lot, I looked down and saw a small snake in the weeds along the path. At the same moment, my friend looked up and announced that we were in a patch of serviceberry bushes.

It's unusual to see snakes in the northern Rockies. It wasn't much, just a small garter snake, but a rare sighting nonetheless.

She began picking the ripe berries and offering them to me, insisting I try them. I immediately recognized the mythic imagery of a woman offering me fruit from a tree in the company of a serpent. My friend is funny and theatrical, so when I pointed this out she took it upon herself to really play up the role of Eve. I ate without any hesitation.

Less than a week later, I was leading a team on a week long hiking trip in the Gallatin range, near Bozeman. At one point we walked out of the trees to an open meadow and I saw another snake. My first thought was, "Huh, I guess it's normal to see snakes around here."

At that instant my hiking partners walked out of the bushes to meet me, and one fellow exclaimed: "Jacqueline just made me eat serviceberries, they are SO good!"

Sure enough, our lone female teammate offered one of the men fruit from a tree in the presence of a serpent.

Then we all looked at the little snake and got a surprise—it had its mouth wrapped around a big mouse with the hind feet and tail poking out. The snake looked sort of ridiculous with its porky meal stretching its narrow girth in a way that seemed impossible, like some creepy scene on The Nature Channel.

Also, both women in this story are Canadian. I'm not sure what to make of this funny set of events. Any mythologists wanna chime in and tell me what any of this means? Especially the mouse!

3

REASSURANCE

The dream shows the inner truth and reality of the patient as it really is: not as I conjecture it to be, and not as he would like it to be, but as it is.

—Carl Gustav Jung

I went through a time of heightened dreaming, and the themes and stories that emerged seemed scripted to disarm my fears. I was presented with some of the scary elements from the UFO abduction phenomenon, but they would play out in a way that wasn't scary at all, instead they were somehow *reassuring*. What I experienced felt sort of normal, to the point of being almost bland.

Some of the posts that follow were from the first months of the blog, and others were separated by years. I was writing the same thing, again and again. The sensations and emotions were consistent, the message was clear—these dreams were trying to put me at ease.

Reassuring dreams

Wednesday, March 18, 2009

My weird journey has brought me face to face with a lot of people who declare themselves to be psychic, intuitive, or existing at a higher spiritual vibration. I'm deeply skeptical of these claims, but if it's true, I might as well chat with them. They all ask me what I do. Do I meditate? Do I pray? Do I use a Ouija board?

I don't do any of that—I sleep under the stars.

Here's what seems to work for me. I walk into the mountains alone with a dinky backpack holding just the bare essentials. I live in a beautiful place, so this is convenient. I check the weather before I go (this means looking to see if there are any clouds in the south), because I don't want to be bothered with a tent.

I hike until it's dark, set out a little pad, then lay myself down to sleep. The proper term is *open bivouac*, but the accepted slang is *astro-bivy*.

If I'm inspired, I'll go thru a simple request. I'll ask aloud, "Okay universe, if you want to tell me anything that could help our troubled world, or if there is a lesson I need, please let me know. I am open and receptive. Thank you."

And then I fall asleep.

The results have been positively bizarre. I've had the most weirdly vivid dreams. Some of them are richly mythic with heavy-handed metaphors, but most of the time they are curiously reassuring—so much so, that I call these my *reassuring dreams*.

I don't quite know what all means, but my synchronicities have (for the most part) been playful, and sometimes downright silly. Why it's unfolding for me like this, I have no idea. Maybe because I'm a cartoonist, it's manifesting as sort of cartoony.

I've met a lot of people who claim they've been abducted, and when I tell them I sleep outside alone they'll say, "I could NEVER do that." For me it's just the opposite. I am deeply content alone in the mountains. I love sleeping under the stars.

Text added March 28, 2019:

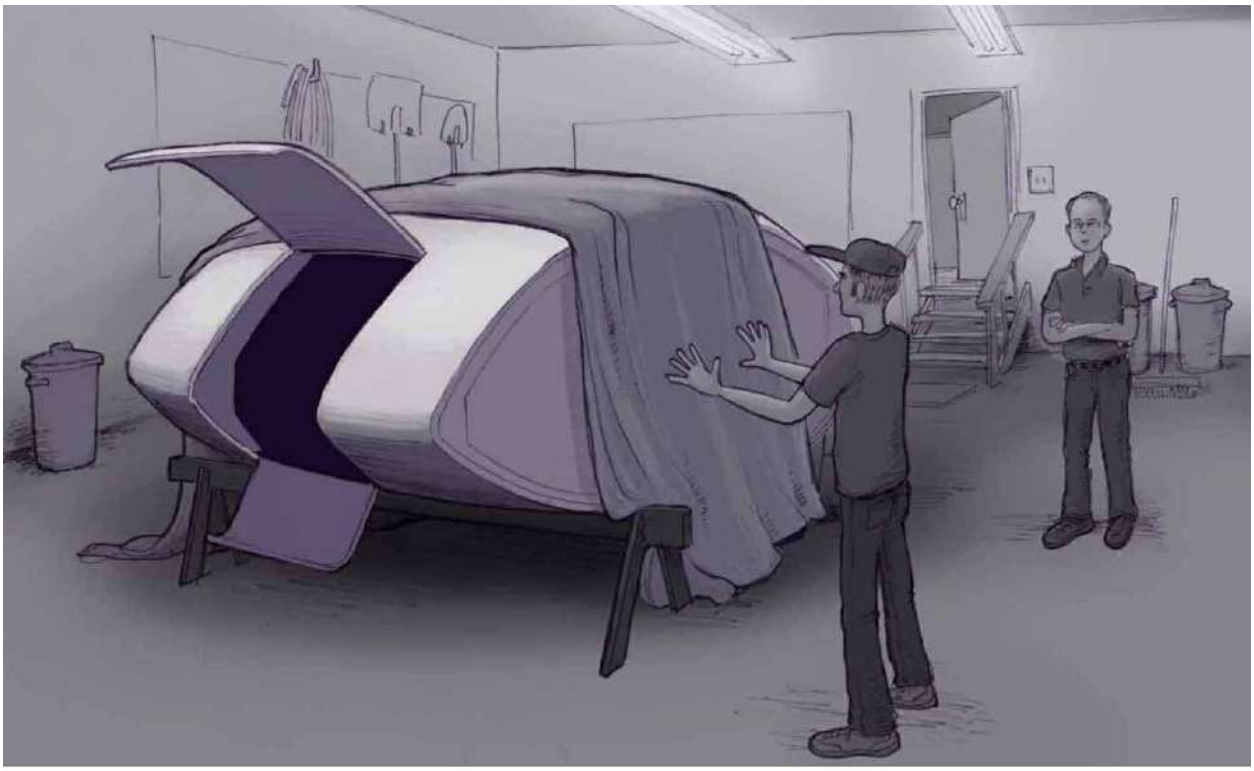
During the final review of this post for this book, my editor Suzanne Chancellor added a comment in the margin of our shared document. She highlighted the final line of the post, *I love sleeping under the stars*, then asked: "Have you ever thought you might be doing this to leave yourself vulnerable TO be abducted?"

I replied: “Yes.”

That’s an honest answer, and it’s something I’ve thought about a lot. But I feel like they could take me from my house just as easily, and I told her that. Our little exchange came exactly ten years and ten days after this short essay was posted.

Funny dream in my brother's garage

Wednesday, November 4, 2009



feeling a distorion of reality

During the summer of 2008, I was at the receiving end of a series of oddly vivid dreams. I call these "reassuring" dreams, because each one seems to confront a frightening issue within the UFO lore.

In these dreams, scary things are presented to me as something simple and non-threatening. I'm not sure what to make of these dreams.

One of these dreams had the distinct air of comedy. It happened last summer while I was sleeping in a tent in the mountains of central Wyoming.

Please note, this NEVER happened—it was a dream!

In this dream, I was visiting my older brother in Michigan. We were together in his kitchen, and he off-handedly told me he had something he thought I would find interesting. Then he took me to the garage and showed me what he had—*it was a flying saucer!*

It was about the size of a van, up on saw-horses and partially covered by a

tarp. It looked like someone had started disassembling the thing, because two big sections had been removed from the sides. A door was open, and the interior was an eerie blackness.

I was completely mystified.

My brother calmly explained he'd done some sort of government work, and knew some guy who ended up with this thing. This other guy didn't want it anymore, so my brother took it off his hands as a favor. Anyway, it was funny how casual he was about it.

Here's the weird part. He explained that if I got too close it would distort my perceptions, and well, *alter reality*. I didn't quite get what he meant, so I approached it and as I got closer, there was a distinct warping of my psyche. This eerie feeling would be hard to explain, but it was very defined. The feeling was unmistakably vivid.

And here's the bizarre part—*that warped sensation was familiar*, it exactly matched my memory of the events from Maine in 1993, and the dream like fog I'd experienced.

As I backed away the feeling subsided, and when I got closer it happened again. I could slowly move back and forth and control the intensity of the sensation.

My brother was totally cavalier about the whole thing. He said he'd gotten used to that weird feeling, and it was no big deal. But he couldn't figure out how to get inside the thing, that sensation had held him back. Then he showed me how he'd attached a digital camera to the end of a long stick, and he put it in the door to see what was inside.

Recurring dream

Sunday, November 8, 2009

a visual download in a dream

Over this last week I've had a recurring dream. The imagery is decidedly foggy, so I can't say much. I seem to have had the same dream every night, and I think it started after the six-hour phone call with Anya a week ago last Saturday.

Here's as much as I remember. I'm lying down on my side, and my brain is being filled with information. I see it visually as little items falling down and entering my head. The image I get is like breakfast cereal being poured from a box with my head as the bowl. The "items" were all little rectangles and falling in slow motion like something out of a cereal commercial.

On the very first night, I even saw a kitchen funnel in my ear! I was lying sideways on the pillow, and the funnel made it easier to pour the items into my head. Even while dreaming I recognized this imagery as downright silly, matching my temperament as a cartoonist.

What am I being downloaded with? I'm not sure, but I woke up last night and I could visualize a tidy list of everything that went into my head. Sadly, as I type this, I can't remember anything.

During this dream, I am always lying down, and for some reason, I sense that Anya Briggs is there, and she might even be pouring the box of cereal, albeit metaphorically. And we are both wearing tight fitting dark suits, like a scuba diver might wear.

Anya Briggs emailed me this comment (slightly edited):

> Ha! ... Ok, that's funny that you thought they looked like cereal or something, because to me, if they were looking like cereal, they look like LIFE cereal ... You know: "Hey Mikey! He likes it!" That cereal? Sure there's no *coincidence* here?

Text added March 28, 2010:

I wanted to write this when I first posted this dream, but it felt too pompous or something. It seemed that each little square of breakfast cereal was a separate topic. One was philosophy, one was advanced physics, another was the principles of consciousness, etc…

Reassuring dreams, two nights in a row

Thursday, April 5, 2012

For awhile I was keeping a sort of diary of my experiences, and would just dump them into a document on my computer. This document is now 111 pages long. I haven't added anything in a long time, but I remembered two dreams that seemed curious and searched them out. Here's what I wrote:

June 5, 2008:

I'm in Alaska working for an outdoor school. I just finished teaching a mountaineering course, and I'm now at the base camp, a lovely farm north of Anchorage. I sleep in a little wall tent off in the woods near the farm. There is no nighttime, it's always daylight this time of year.

I've had two weirdly vivid dreams, two nights in a row.

The first was a full-blow abduction dream. Interior of an alien craft, a cold table, telepathy, weird alien hybrids (they looked like tiny shrunken old men) and people (yup, normal people), they were on the craft too.

The exact details are extremely foggy, but the overwhelming impression was a sort of relief. There was nothing scary about this dream. The alien hybrids were small and non-threatening. The people onboard seemed to have a purpose and a job, and it was somehow for the collective good.

The little aliens seemed so normal, and I wasn't intimidated in the least. I literally thought to myself, "*This is them?* Why am I so afraid of these dinky little things?"

The most vivid memory from this dream was the telepathy, and how it sounded in my own head. It was extremely clear, free of any static, and it felt like the volume knob was set at the perfect level. I was impressed, I thought: "Wow, this is working super well. There's no need to worry about communicating, because it's SO clear."

The next morning, I tried hard to remember what was told to me during the finely tuned telepathy, but I couldn't remember.

Now, lemme say, I feel strongly this was a dream, and not some foggy memory of anything real. I woke up feeling relieved and at peace. There was something deeply reassuring about this dream. I was confronted with

something that should have been scary, but it wasn't. Instead, it felt so normal.

And then the following night's dream:

This was filled with very moody and frightening images. Huge air force jets chasing things in the sky, and people on the ground (myself included) watching helplessly. Eventually there was a terrifying nuclear explosion on the distant horizon, then bunches of them. I took shelter in a sort of children's puppet theater. There was a recurring image of a boy "emerging" from a stage prop over and over again. Then I awoke.

How do I interpret this? The overtly theatrical ending, literally on a stage makes me wonder. And the weird repeating emergence of a little boy out of an obvious stage prop. It was a sort of jack-in-the-box thing, and the claustrophobic little stage reminded me of that theater in Disneyland with the mechanical Lincoln.

Anyway, both dreams were just dreams. They were extremely vivid, colorful, cinematic and weirdly 3D. The bizarre imagery in both these dreams is probably nothing, and I want to convince myself of this—that these are JUST dreams. It's probably nothing more than my poor tortured psyche dealing with the 24 hour sunlight, but it feels weirder than that.

A forgotten reassuring dream

Wednesday, April 4, 2012

In the summer of 2008, Dr. Leo Sprinkle called me and said I should contact a woman who lived near me, saying she had some interesting experiences. The next call I made was to this woman, who I'll call Tracy (a pseudonym). After hearing some of her story, we both decided I should drive to her home so I could play the role of investigator and sketch artist. She and her husband lived over three hours from my home, and she invited me to spend the night in their guest cabin.

I arrived at her house in the afternoon and we spent the rest of the day talking about her experiences. She had a fascinating set of vivid sightings and events that seemed to indicate a lifetime of contact with the UFO phenomenon.

I took notes and did a sketch of a craft with her guidance. I'll often admit that I am a crummy investigator, because all I ever seem to do is have a heart to heart conversation with a witness. I am NOT objective in the slightest, and get all emotionally wrapped up in their stories. I liked Tracy, and I thought she had a great outlook. Sadly, I never did anything with the sketches or my notes.

Here's where it gets strange. I found something in my diary that I do NOT remember writing. I found it while digging through some old notes about the two dreams in Alaska in 2008. This is another dream with a very similar feel. I think I typed this into my laptop the morning I woke up in Tracy's guest cabin.

From July 14, 2008:

I had a dream last night at Tracy's house. I remember I had a clear vision of several gray aliens. There was no fear, instead there was a sort of "normal" feeling like I was coming to terms with all this and they weren't so bad. Seeing them felt ordinary and left me with the distinct impression of something extremely calming, and in a way, *reassuring*.

I do NOT think there was any kind of abduction experience. These were dreams, but they fit the pattern of the two dreams in Alaska, which were

extremely vivid and seemingly orchestrated.

Red Pill Junkie commented:

I like the label you give to these dreams—reassuring.

It is as if something—your unconscious or maybe even something else is trying to help you get rid of your apprehensions.

Who knows. Maybe someday you'll discover that the 'block' Budd Hopkins was unable to lift when he tried to hypnotize you has been finally lifted.

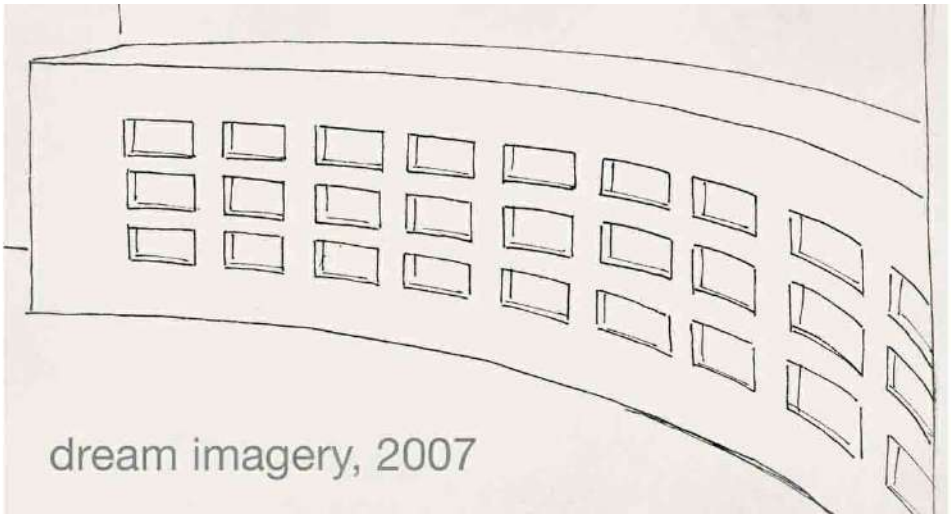
Mike Clelland replied:

Maybe I should have included more in this post, but it was tough to really express. I was avoiding some thoughts, and I should just say it::

All these *reassuring dreams* feel like a sort of projection from outside of myself. They FEEL like an implanted dream experience that is meant to calm me down—to REASSURE me. I think I know what I am implying, but I have no other way to describe this other than the way it feels.

Sketch from a dream

Thursday, May 10, 2012



On December 17, 2011, I sent an email to Kim Carlsberg with an attached drawing, and asked if meant anything to her. She replied with a very short answer: "*Incubation chamber*."

Here's the genesis of this sketch. I drew it after a very vivid dream, I saw something with a bold clarity that seemed important. The drawing shows a sort of shelf system with little glass windows, probably about waist high or a little higher. I drew this image after my one and only hypnotic regression with Budd Hopkins. I remember quickly scribbling it in my sketchbook the very next morning; Oct 24, 2007.

In the dream, this shelf system was garishly colored with electrically intense yellows, greens and reds. It felt like everything was covered in day-glow paint. The bright colors seemed fake, like their purpose was to force me to remember. There was no emotion associated with this dream vision, but I marveled at the clarity of the imagery.

Kim is an outspoken contactee who did an audio interview with me on this site (linked here). She also published the coffee table book: *The Art of Close Encounters*. She sent me to an image from page 141 in her book, this shows something somewhat similar to the sketch I sent to her. The artwork, created by and abductee, shows a curved wall of aquarium like tanks, each with a

tiny baby floating inside. There is a gray alien in the scene standing alongside the wall of tanks and it's pointing to one of the chambers, which is lit up to show a hybrid fetus.

I sent my sketch to her because I *knew* what her response would be, and in a way, it confirmed what I'd suspected.

I've met Kim a few times at conferences, and she will laugh in my face when I say that I'm not sure if I'm actually an abductee. She isn't being mean—she has a point.

The term "incubation chamber" shows up a lot in the abduction lore. People report seeing walls of aquarium like boxes, or sometimes glass tubes. These tanks hold tiny fetuses, floating in some sort of liquid—they seem to be half alien and half human. The implication is that these beings are involved in some sort of hybridization program of genetics and breeding.

Why did I see such a garish image the morning after a hypnosis session to explore potential UFO experiences? Was my subconscious trying to tell me something?

A vivid reassuring dream

Wednesday, March 26, 2014

This is one more of my reassuring dreams, and here's what lead up to it. I woke up at around five in the morning on March 25. I was wide awake, lying in bed, not sure if I could fall back to sleep.

My laptop was nearby, and I opened it. I found a podcast that had been posted online just a few days earlier on *Starborn Support Radio* (March 23, 2014, highly recommended).

This is normal for me, to listen to audio from my computer at night. It was an interview with Chad and Alta Dillard, a husband and wife who've both had extensive UFO abduction experiences and all of the high strangeness that comes along with those events. I've spoken at length with Alta, but that was a few years ago. I lay in bed and listened.

I was soon asleep. The interview was still playing as I started dreaming. The voices of Chad and Alta were overlaid as a sort of soundtrack to the entire dream.

In the dream, I was lying flat on my back on my bathroom floor. It was almost as if I was hiding there, but at the same time I felt very comfortable. I had the thought that the floor was great, and I should get a firmer mattress. I suddenly felt this full body sensation, it was a kind of shimmering vibration as if I was fading away, and I thought: "I'm going to be taken!" It felt as if my molecules were beginning to dissolve and this feeling was very familiar. There was an unmistakable knowing that this was the start of an alien abduction event.

At first I was scared and tried to fight it, but then I changed my mind and said to myself: *"Go with it! Go with it!"*

I'm not sure what happened next. It seems as if I was still lying flat on my back on the bathroom floor, but there was a palpable sense of presence as if something was nearby.

I reached up from where I was lying on the floor and started to open the bathroom door. I wanted to see if anyone (or anything) was in the house, but I hesitated in fear. Then I said to myself, "No, I need to know." I opened the door and looked into the kitchen, but nothing was there.

The next thing I remembered was floating around the living room. I had no control over what was happening. I was positioned as if I was lying flat like a plank, but facing down so I could look forward and at the floor. The motions were quite fast, and again, the sensation was *very familiar*. At first was I terrified, but then I excitedly cried out: “Go through the window!” I said this because of all the UFO abduction literature I had read over the years with endless reports of people being floated through windows. At that point I quickly approached the window, but veered away, and floated up high near the ceiling and then made my way to the couch, where I was set down gently.

Then I awoke.

While writing this, I realized this dream had a very distinct pattern. I was first feeling fear, then quickly moved past it, then I was excited and curious—this happened three times in quick succession.

This morning I went into the bathroom, and actually laid down on the floor. I realized I’m a bit too tall to have been comfortable the way I was positioned on the floor in the dream—I could fit there, but it was slightly cramped. The rest of the dream was quite exact as far as the visuals of the inside of my home. This is unusual because my dreams tend to be distorted, but this felt real. The view as I floated in my living room seemed perfectly accurate, and everything had a clarity to it that didn’t match my “normal” dreams.

I can’t help but see this as a playful display for my benefit. Was this my subconscious trying to reassure me, or was the source from outside myself. I don’t know, but I was presented with of elements of UFO abduction, and I moved past fear by declaring: *“Go with it! Go with it!”*

4

REMEMBERING MAC TONNIES

Last night I dreamed I was an android. Someone told me, very casually. I wasn't particularly surprised, but the revelation left me with a vague sense of existential unease. Speaking of dreams: that's one very good reason for creating a blog that I hadn't thought of moments before, when it just seemed like a Cool Thing To Do. A dynamic medium like this welcomes dreams...in 30 years, we'll be carrying around personal dream recorders and thrusting them into the faces of friends saying, "Watch this!" But everyone will be too engaged in their own half-forgotten Technicolor reveries to pay much attention.

—Mac Tonnies
January 26, 2003 (the first week of his blog)

Mac Tonnies, dead at 34

Friday, October 23, 2009

Mac Tonnies, my friend, is now dead.

He was found in his apartment on Thursday, October 22.

Mac was one of a kind. He was a brilliant thinker, very funny and a beautiful speaker. I'm crying in a coffee shop in Moab as I write this.

You need to understand something—I needed Mac to reassure me that I wasn't delusional or insane. He got some desperate late night calls from me, during my moments of darkness. He was enormously supportive of me, and my confusing issues.

A little over a week ago, he'd called me out of the blue. We would occasionally have ridiculously long talks about UFOs and the paranormal, and this was the first time he'd ever called me. We spoke for about three hours, and that was normal. I shared some deeply personal stuff, and he was understanding and humorous.

Mac and I never met in person, but I considered him a close friend.

Text added Dec. 2018:

The post above was written at a coffee shop in Moab, Utah. I added it to the blog within minutes of hearing the awful news.

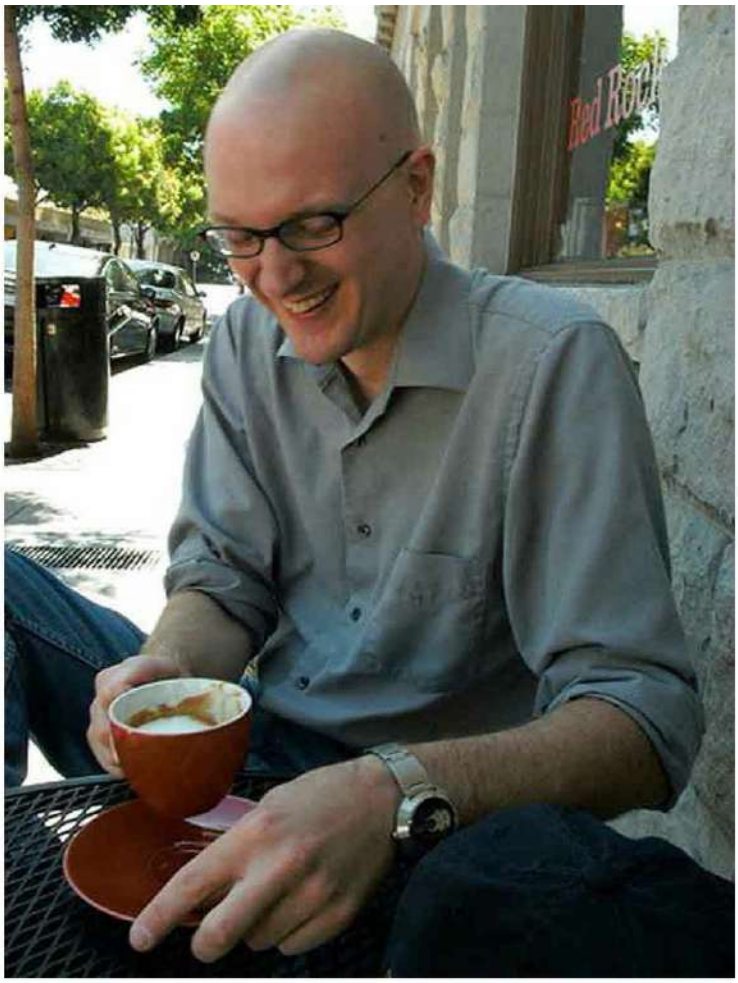
Mac was a remarkable young writer, whose thoughtful voice could have changed the way we think about UFOs. He was a blogger, and his site *Posthuman Blues* was perceptive, creative, wry, shrewd, smart and funny. It debuted in 2003, the dawn of the internet era, and he played with ideas about the future, humanity and UFOs. He lead the quintessential bohemian life, working as a barista in a Starbucks in Kansas City, Missouri while producing a remarkable outpouring of creative work.

He was an author, playwright and essayist. He hosted an episode of *Supernatural Investigator,* a Canadian television show about the research and implications of extraterrestrial life—and watching that now is heartbreaking.

His death hit me hard, and it took me nearly five months before I could collect my thoughts enough to write about him.

My Pal Mac Tonnies

Tuesday, February 9, 2010



in his element

Just a few days ago, I wrote an email to a friend about Mac Tonnies' final book. I typed out the word *posthumous*, and was struck by how much it looks like the title *Posthuman* Blues, the name of Mac's blog. My mind can get trapped in an unhealthy obsessive spiral, and I see every little coincidence as a sign of something deeper.

This is a long post, a rambling self-examination on the loss of a friend. I'd been dealing with a jumble of spinning memories, and needed to get them out of my head and written down. I may remove it from the blog at some point,

but it feels honest.

~ ~ ~

In late October of last year, I drove back from a small UFO conference in California (Whitley Strieber's Dreamland event in Joshua Tree). This was a decidedly heady time, and a lot of intense stuff had invaded my life.

I stopped in Moab, Utah to visit a friend, and camped in the desert at the edge of town. The next morning I had a smoothie at a small breakfast shop, and for some reason I'd requested bee pollen as an extra. I'd never had it before, and figured I'd give it a try. Within minutes of finishing the drink, my face turned red, my lips puffed up, and I was itchy all over. I left the restaurant, walked around the corner and threw up on grass next to the sidewalk.

I was having an allergic reaction. At no point did I feel my airway closing up, but believe me—I was one step away from driving to the emergency room. I took a Benadryl, and waited for it to pass.

While in the throes of this anaphylaxis event, I went to visit a UFO researcher named Elaine Douglass. We had met once before, and had spoken on the phone many times.

When I arrived at her home, she saw something was wrong with me. I tried to explain, but was worried I would be sick again. I ended up lying on her bathroom floor for the next half hour. Eventually the symptoms began to subside, and we drank tea together at her kitchen table.

We talked about her research, and I told her about my ongoing weirdness. I felt progressively better, and after about an hour I seemed fine. I thought our visit would be short, but we ended up talking for hours. It was late in the afternoon when I finally said goodbye.

At that point I had a long drive in front of me, from southern Utah to my home in Idaho. I went into a little cafe on the main street to fill up on coffee. I pulled out my laptop, checked my email and found out that Mac had died. I sat alone in the back corner of the cafe and cried.

I had talked with Mac just a week or so earlier; it was a typical conversation for us—deep, wide ranging and lots of laughs. It spiraled on late into the night.

I'd assumed that one day I would sit in a coffee shop with Mac, we'd

drink espresso and talk, just like we always had. And now he's gone.

I wrote a short notice and posted it on my blog.

Mac had a reverence for espresso—he wrote about it lovingly, and often. I went up to the counter, ordered a double latte short, and savored every beautiful drop.

At that point nobody really knew how he had died, but from what I'd found online, it was assumed to be a heart issue. Earlier in the year, Mac had told me of an experience where he had gone to the hospital to get some sort of heart exam. This was after he'd fainted at work. He was calm and dismissive about the whole thing, treating it as a nuisance.

I got in my car and started driving north. The emotional numbness was oppressive and scary. I chose to travel on the two-lane desert highways, avoiding the inhumanity of I-15 and Salt Lake City.

The drive was astounding beautiful. I had a series of podcast interviews with Mac all loaded up on my iPod, and I listened to them as the sun set in a glorious display of red and orange. The route was empty and desolate, and I drove for as long as an hour without seeing another car.

One of the downloads was a four hour long Coast to Coast interview from just twenty days earlier. This was particularly beautiful and bittersweet. You could hear the delight in George Noory's voice, it was obvious he was perfectly charmed and engaged talking with Mac. As silly as this sounds, you could sense his mind expanding trying to keep up with Mac's big ideas.

During this time alone in my car listening to Mac's calm and wise voice, my chest began to ache. There were sharp pains right behind my ribs, and I knew something was wrong. I have a minimal amount of first aid training, and the symptoms of cardiac arrest are severe "crushing" pain. That wasn't what I was feeling, it was presenting as something less intense, but it was real nonetheless.

The pain in my chest seemed related to the allergic reaction from that morning, but at the same time, it wasn't lost on me that it could be some sort of sympathetic reaction to Mac's death. I pulled into a gas station, bought a single aspirin in a little foil packet. I swallowed it and hoped this wasn't the big one.

I got back in my car and drove off into the lonely night.

When I finished all of Mac's interviews, I started over and listened again.

~ ~ ~

In the weeks that followed, there was a lot of talk about the status of his final book. A story came out that there was a printed copy of the manuscript found on his desk in a three-ring binder, with final edits in Mac's handwriting in the margins.

During my correspondence with Mac throughout 2009, I made it clear that I was eager to do a few illustrations for his book, and Mac was delighted by my offer. I'll add that he'd been super supportive of my artwork since I'd begun posting some of my drawings online. He would consistently comment on the cartoons, and I deeply appreciated his observant compliments.

I contacted Mac's publisher to ask about the illustrations, and he told me that Mac had mentioned me and my offer to do drawings for the book. He felt it was a good idea, and I set about creating some initial sketches. Having a small role in Mac's book was a profound honor, and I took the responsibility seriously.

~ ~ ~

On December 1, 2009, I received the text of Mac's book as a word document. I took it to the local copy shop and had it printed. I punched holes in the paper and put it in a three-ring binder. At first I was intimidated to read it—there was something sacred, or maybe daunting about it, and it sat unopened on my desk.

A few days later, I realized I needed to sit down and start reading.

I went through a sort of formal process. I made a cup of tea, got my reading glasses, turned the on lamp and sat on the couch. The binder was in front of me on the coffee table, I opened it and read the words "The Crypoterrestrials by Mac Tonnies." Then, I heard a loud *click*, right next to me. I looked over at my CD player, it had spontaneously ejected a cassette—all by itself.

That CD player is well over a decade old, and in all those years this has *never* happened. It seemed extremely odd, and I'm not kidding—it happened at the EXACT second I read the very first words of Mac's book.

~ ~ ~

When I finally sat down at the desk to start the drawings, I was suddenly hit with that same dull but very real chest pain I'd felt while driving alone in Utah. It was centered behind my ribs and impossible to ignore. It wasn't the acute pain described by cardiac arrest patients, but was real nonetheless. I managed to dismiss it for over a week, hoping it would go away, but it never did, it stayed exactly the same. The only way I can describe it is to say it felt creepy.

I'd never had chest pain before and now it had happened twice, both times directly linked with Mac. One morning I woke up and the finger tips in my left hand were numb, and I had a very distressing sensation in my left armpit.

I went to my doctor that day. My pulse and blood pressure were perfect, and I tried to describe the symptoms to the doctor. He listened carefully and was genuinely perplexed.

I also told him it might be psychosomatic, because the timing coincided with the death of a young friend from heart issues. He heard me out, then said, "Let's have a listen."

I got up on the exam table, and he pressed his stethoscope to my chest. I watched as he listened, and after a moment I could see his face make a sort of *Ah-Ha* expression. He heard a very specific rubbing noise that indicated pericarditis, this is a swelling of the pericardium, the sac that surrounds the heart.

He explained the treatment for pericarditis is a daily regime of anti-inflammatory medication and if I responded well, there was nothing to worry about. I started taking Aleve, and within 24 hours the pain was gone.

The numbness in the fingertips of my left hand continued, and they are numb now, as I type this. Presently it's very minor, and neither I or my doctor is concerned.

The process of doing the drawings was emotional. It was, in some way, a form of grieving. I simply had to immerse myself into the creative process in a way I'd usually avoid. I got swallowed up in the minute details, and ended up adding too many tiny lines in the drawings. I cared about the illustrations in a way that felt important.

During our last phone call, Mac told me about R.Crumb's latest book. It was a literal interpretation of *The Book of Genesis,* the first chapter of the Bible. I hadn't heard about it, and Mac delighted in describing the funny

details. He reveled in the lurid begatting and the violent smiting.

On Thursday, October 22, I found the book in a store on the main street of Moab. I bought it immediately, and sent my last email to Mac using the wifi in the bookstore. I later realized this was the day they'd found Mac's body in his apartment in Kansas City.

Mac and I were both huge fans of R.Crumb, and I made sure to embrace that inky scratchy look as I worked on his illustrations.

It was shortly after we met over the phone that I created a blog as a way to archive some of my cartoon work. Here's how Mac introduced my new site on Posthuman Blues: "Blog of the day—*Little Boing Marks* by friend and ufological co-conspirator Mike Clelland. Mike's drawings are delightful: R. Crumb meets Dr. Seuss."

The inspiration for the style and format of the illustrations for Mac's book was lifted directly from an R.Crumb illustrated edition of *The Monkey Wrench Gang*, by Edward Abbey. Curiously, I bought this hard to find book a decade earlier, on that same main street in Moab.

~ ~ ~

I suffer from clinical depression, something that's all too common with creative types. Throughout my life, I've gone through cycles where I've walked away from the desk and ignored my skills as an illustrator. 2009 was probably the emptiest time of my life. I deliberately rejected drawing. I felt terribly barren, and uninspired.

Mac's book forced me to break through that stuck feeling—the job of sitting at my desk with pens and ink felt wonderful. I enjoyed the act of putting little black lines on clean white paper. Something I thought I'd lost, had returned.

The world needed his amazing mind, and his eagerness to look deep into the unknown. I feel truly blessed to have known Mac.

Illustrations for Mac Tonnies

Thursday, February 4, 2010

Mac and the door

I was enormously fortunate to play a small role in my friend's final book, an extremely important work by one of the world's great thinkers. This was powerful and bittersweet experience, forcing me to reflect on what it means to be human. I did a series of eleven illustrations, simple black and white chapter openers. As indulgent as it sounds, I am convinced that Mac was in the room with me during my time at the desk with my pens.

There's more to this story, and much of it is emotional and challenging. It was a very confusing way to grieve the loss of a friend. I will write more

soon, when I can better articulate my mixed up sentiments.

Text added in Dec. 2018:

It's been almost nine years since Mac's passing, and I realize there was never a follow up on this post. Here's the rest of the story. I'd finished all the chapter headers, yet my job wasn't done. I needed to do one more drawing. I'd done a rough sketch of Mac standing at an open door with a bright light streaming into a dark room. I tried to create *final art*, my term for a completed illustration, but the image reeked of death and I couldn't finish it.

Still, I felt a need to keep at it, but couldn't quite capture the pose at the door—I needed some sort of reference.

Following Mac's passing, his mother had shipped out some of his belongings to his friends. She sent me his black leather jacket, the one that Mac wore in countless online photos. Many were moody self-portraits, before the term "selfie". His mom sent me a note saying, "Mac loved this jacket."

Her gift was poignant and beautiful. The jacket fits me perfectly.

I put it on, and had my neighbor shoot some pictures of me in front of a door facing the sunshine. I used these images to get the shadows and reflections on the jacket. I drew Mac, but used myself as reference.

I got the drawing to a point of completion, but it somehow felt hollow. The bright light was effective, but its source was empty. Without thinking, I added a lone gray alien with a big head back lit in a sparse white setting. I worried the image might come across as heavy handed or unnecessarily dramatic, but it felt right. The drawings were done.

Email from Mac Tonnies

Tuesday, November 10, 2009

I searched thru my old email files and I found hundreds of messages from Mac Tonnies. He was a master of the quick note and insightful reply.

Below is an email exchange with Mac from a little over two years ago, it took place the morning after one of our late night phone conversations. I'd just returned from New York City, where I'd met with Budd Hopkins and David Jacobs as part of the documentary project. This was the "whirlwind trip" mentioned in the text.

Mac was an amazing guy, and he kept me balanced as I struggled to make sense of my own story. He helped me enormously.

Mike: Good chat session last night, I needed that. Thanks.

Mac: It's always uniquely therapeutic to talk UFOs with someone who knows what he's talking about. Sounds like a whirlwind trip!

Mike: There seems to be a desire (from the film crew folks) for me to stand up and declare: "Hello, my name is Mike, and I am a UFO abductee." But, I can't quite get there.

Mac: I kind of sensed that. Great drama, but not your bag – and rightfully not. You certainly appear to share experiences with some "abductees," but the label is so stifling that it's undeserving of your balanced skepticism, in my opinion.

Mike: Is that like an alcoholic saying that he doesn't have a drinking problem? Am I in denial?

Mac: I don't think so. You're simply suspending judgment (and in so doing transcending what, ultimately, is a fairly limiting label).

Mac Tonnies, Anya Briggs and owls

Monday, August 15, 2011

On September 28, 2009, Mac Tonnies was the featured guest on Coast to Coast AM with George Noory. He was a breath of fresh air on a mainstream radio show that seldom strays from predictable topics. As always, he spoke with remarkable clarity.

Less than a month later, he was found dead in his apartment in Kansas City.

His performance on Coast to Coast was a triumph, he was delightfully engaging on the most popular show of its kind. It felt like he was just about to jump to a new level of success, something he truly deserved. I am forever left with the sad thoughts of what might have been.

During the third hour of the show, he spoke about a friend of his who had been seeing owls. He said that this friend was self-aware enough to examine these sightings in the moment, making sure they weren't some sort of screen memory—Mac was talking about me!

On October 1, Mac and I had this short email exchange.

> **I wrote:** Mac—My owl stories made it to Coast to Coast?!?!?
>
> **Mac replied:** Yep. But I didn't have time to finish the story or even tell it properly.

When I read Mac's reply I wasn't sure what he meant—it was cryptic, and left me confused. What was it in the story that he couldn't finish? Sadly, I would never have the chance to ask him.

Fast forward to the spring of 2011 and a phone call with Anya Briggs. The topic of Mac Tonnies came up, and I described how it felt like he was cajoling me from the other side to pursue a graphic novel. Anya is a powerful psychic, and suddenly blurted out, *"He's here!"*

She starts frantically channeling what Mac was telling her, then she laughed and in her own voice said, "Oh I *really* like this guy!"

This has happened more than once during phone calls with Anya, and each time I end up intimidated by the intensity of the whole thing. But I suddenly remembered that unanswered question, and I asked Mac through Anya.

I said, “Mac, when you were on Coast to Coast, you told a little bit of one of my owl stories, but later you emailed me that you didn’t have time to finish the story. I never knew what you meant. *What were you going to say?*”

Without skipping a beat, Anya replied: “I was going to say that owls might be a kind of window into your world, and that some other force could be using those great big eyes as a tool to see into your reality. Their eyes are like video cameras, and they are being used as a direct link. Someone was watching you!”

That bit of dialog is paraphrased from memory, but it’s pretty close.

I knew instantly that Anya shared *exactly* what Mac would have said. This was something that Mac and I had talked about during one of our late night multi-hour phone sessions. This idea arose from a comment I’d received on one of my early blog posts from none other than Whitley Strieber.

I’d been wondering for over a year what Mac was hinting at when he said, “I didn’t have time to finish the owl story,” and when Anya communicated his answer to my question it made perfect sense. Maybe there was some sort of magical technology, and alien entities were watching me and Kristen through those great big eyes! True or not, this is exactly the kind of esoteric detail that would have absolutely delighted Mac.

Police sketch artist

Saturday, January 30, 2010

Drawn after a careful explanation from Anya Briggs,
I was told that the overall image is very accurate

I got to play the role of police sketch artist for Anya Briggs. She had a memory of a very odd event that took place on 17th street in Manhattan, and her experience is part of short article by A.M. Murphy (linked here). Here's a slightly edited excerpt:

> The winter solstice (of 2007) brought what Anya believes is her first conscious contact. Standing at a crosswalk waiting for a light to change, Anya found herself face to face with (as she later wrote), "the strangest looking man sitting in the window of a Starbucks.
>
> He wasn't abnormal, for all intents and purposes he had a perfect body, like a professional swimmer's, but way bigger... he also happened to have the longest arms and fingers on a person I've ever seen, and additionally, he was about 6'8" or 6'9" and had the

> most perfect posture I've ever seen. He was sitting in the window and was also wearing—head to toe—cream-colored clothing. I mean it—his shoes, shirt, pants, sweater—all cream-colored. Additionally, he was holding his mug of tea very awkwardly—his elbows were sticking straight out, exactly parallel to the floor."
>
> As she watched this bizarre figure, she became certain he was *not of this earth.* There was a moment of apparent mutual recognition. Then he seemed to inundate her with a new and blissful feeling that Anya describes as "universal love."

Text added Feb. 6, 2010:

Here is an excerpt from a comment I received last night:

> Until I read the text below the drawing, I initially thought this was a picture of a tall, beefed-up Mac Tonnies, given the Starbucks and coffee context. A kind of spooky "deja vu all over again."

When I read this, I felt myself shudder. It seemed so weird. Mac worked as a barista at a series of Starbucks in Kansas City. He was a lover of coffee, and his blog is loaded with deep reverence for espresso. The bald man (despite his uber size) looks more than a little bit like Mac. What does it mean? I have no idea, except I simply know that Anya would have been totally captivated by Mac—as everybody was, myself included.

Cats, strings and laser pointers

Saturday, February 6, 2010

The very first posting on this blog (March 3, 2009) was a short little essay written a few years earlier titled *Cat and String*, a tidy metaphor that attempted to articulate some of the weirdness of the UFO mystery.

The first comment on the first post was from Mac, he wrote: *"Have you read my essay about cats and laser pointers? We're on the same page!"*

The first time I heard of Mac Tonnies was in March, 2007, when he was a guest on a three hour episode of *Binnall of America*, a podcast hosted by Tim Binnall. I was thunderstruck by Mac's voice and ideas.

Without any hesitation, I searched him out. I looked up his name, found his phone number (he had a landline), and called him. At the time I was involved in a documentary, and thought he needed to be involved. The initial call was to ask for an interview, but deep down—I just wanted to talk with him.

Among all his other gifts, Mac Tonnies was a beautiful conversationalist. We got along splendidly, and from that first phone call till the time of his death, we spoke on the phone and emailed incessantly.

It was during our initial correspondence that I sent Mac an email with my 'Cat and String' essay. He replied (almost instantly, as was his nature) that he'd written something similar, but with a laser pointer instead of string. I no longer have a copy of that email, but it must have been over a year before starting my own blog. I searched his site and found Mac's short essay. It's included here:

> Every few nights I get out my laser pointer and indulge my cats in a frenetic game of "chase." Cats are natural hunters, and they're effectively incapable of not looking at the quickly moving red dot that I project onto the carpet, walls, or any piece of furniture that happens to be in its path.
>
> To my cats, the red dot possesses its own vitality. It exists as a distinct entity. While they may see me holding the pointer, they can't (or won't) be distracted by such things once the button is pressed and the living room is suddenly alive with luminous vermin. So they chase it. And chase it. And, if they get close enough, even take swipes at it – in which case I make the dot "flee" or disappear in what seems like a concession of defeat (which, of course, only further arouses the cats' predatory curiosity).
>
> All the while I'm controlling the red dot, I'm taking pains to make it behave like

something intelligible. Just waving the pointer around the room wouldn't be any fun. So I make it "climb," "jump" and scuttle when cornered – even though the laser's impervious to obstructions.

This sense of physicality seems to be the element that makes chasing the laser so engaging – both for the cats and for me.

I can't help but be reminded of our continuing search for assumed extraterrestrial vehicles. UFO sightings demonstrate many of the same aspects of a typical feline laser hunt: mysterious disappearances, "impossible" maneuvers and a predilection for trickery – the apparent *desire* to be seen despite (or because of) a technology presumed to be far in advance of our own. More than one UFO researcher has noted that UFOs behave more like projections or holograms than nuts-and-bolts craft… an observation that begs the nature of the intelligence doing the projecting.

According to astrophysicist Jacques Vallee, UFOs are part of a psychosocial conditioning system by which perceived "rewards" are doled out to reconcile for the dearth of irrefutable physical evidence. The phenomenon – whatever its ultimate nature – obstinately *denies itself*, thus enabling the very game it's intent on playing with us.

We see that sudden spark of red light; we pounce. *This* time we'll catch it for sure.

This essay was posted on Mac's blog *Posthuman Blues* without any headline. It was later titled *Misdirection*, in chapter two of his posthumous book from 2010, *The Cryptoterrestrials*.

Our two essays are eerily similar. I remember the morning I wrote it: I sat at my computer, drank a second cup of coffee, and it simply gushed out of me in a caffeine induced frenzy. I'm not kidding—it wrote itself. The text was short and tidy, and seemed to exactly express the mysterious puzzle that plagued me.

I'm certain I had not read Mac's essay before writing mine.

The similarities are obvious. We expressed the very same metaphoric details. It's funny that Mac, the self-proclaimed post-human technologist used a laser pointer, as opposed to me, the self-proclaimed thrifty minimalist with a piece of string.

Mac and I had some back and forth emails about our little essays, we were trying to figure out who wrote what and when.

On July 29, 2009 I asked: "When did you write that Cat and Laser Pointer essay? Do you have the date? I'm curious."

Mac replied: "I wrote the cat/laser piece a year or so ago – before your cat/string piece, in case you were wondering. I'm pretty sure I wrote mine in late '06, but I'll double-check. *It would be weird if we wrote our essays at the same time!"*

Mac said what I was thinking, that they might have been written at the

same time.

A few days later, Mac emailed me: “I found it, and it’s dated! I just searched my blog and found mine.”

I didn’t follow up on this until after he was gone. It took some digging, but I eventually found the original version of my document, and it was dated.

> Mac’s cat and laser pointer essay was posted on Post Human Blues:
> *September 29, 2006*
>
> My cat and string essay was written:
> *November 25, 2006*

I can’t even begin to untangle what, if anything, this might mean. We wrote what’s essentially the same essay. It happened independently, less than two months apart. If nothing else, I have to agree with Mac—it’s weird.

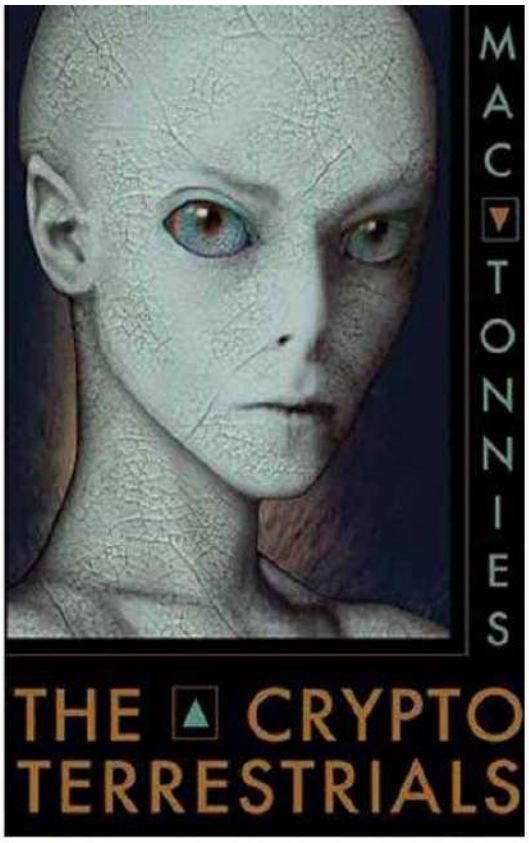
Text added March 2019:

In early December, 2009 I sat with the unpublished manuscript of *The Crypoterrestrials,* and the moment I read the title page my CD player loudly ejected a cassette. I described this earlier—it felt like Mac’s ghost was in the room.

A blog reader commented on that post, pointing out that the heart of a CD player is a laser beam. From where I was sitting on the couch, my CD player was close, just a bit beyond arms reach. The laser had connected us though our cat essays. Was Mac trying to get my attention?

Mac Tonnies' book is on the shelves

Tuesday, March 9, 2010



Mac Tonnies' book, *The Cryptoterrestrials* is now available. I just received a paper copy in the mail. I was privileged to read an advanced copy, and feel strongly saying that this is a very important addition to the UFO literature. The world is a lesser place without Mac's brilliant mind, and gentle voice.

Dia Sobin did the cover art, and she's keeping a lovely memorial blog dedicated to Mac (linked here). Foreword by Nick Redfern, afterword by Greg Bishop, and interior illustrations by me. From Anomalist books.

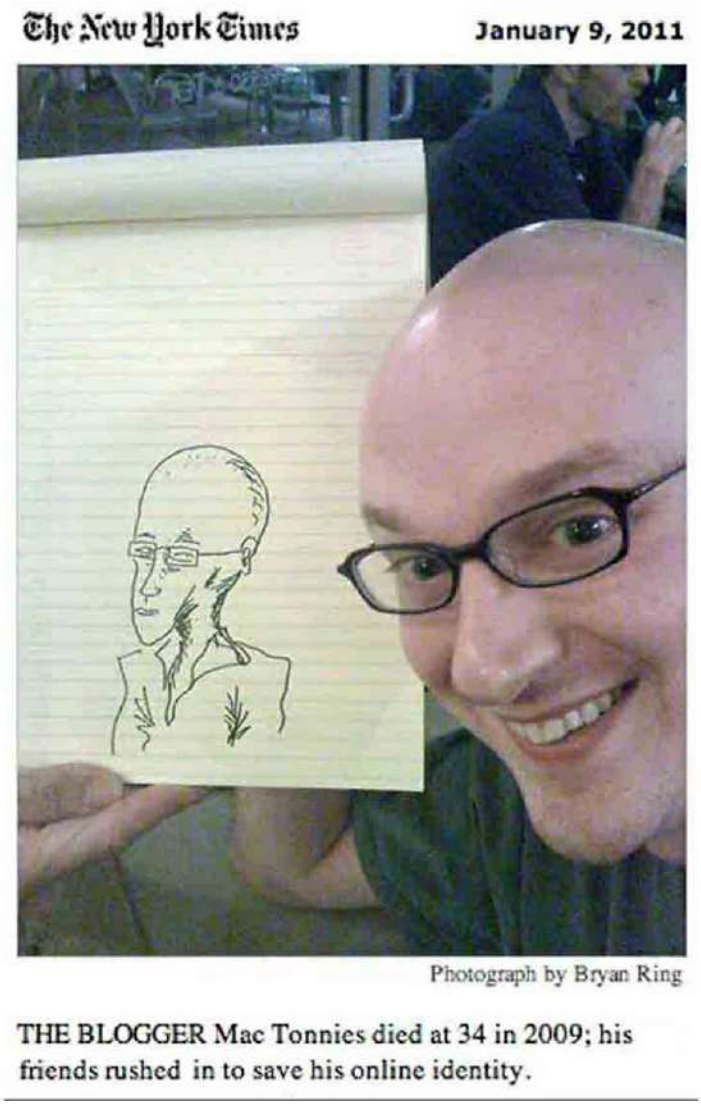
Text added Dec. 2018:

This was posted on March 9, 2010, the same day I was sent a link to a series of still photos featuring a very unusual cluster of owls on a fence in Missouri. These two seemingly unrelated events were the opening salvo in an

onslaught of overt weirdness that almost drove me into madness. That complex story is told in this book through a series of posts all titled: *The Map*.

Mac Tonnies featured in the New York Times

Tuesday, January 4, 2011



Photograph by Bryan Ring

THE BLOGGER Mac Tonnies died at 34 in 2009; his friends rushed in to save his online identity.

This upcoming Sunday, there will be an article in the New York Times Magazine titled: *Cyberspace When You're Dead*, by Rob Walker. It features a long section on Mac Tonnies, and the impact of his passing as seen on the internet. Here's an excerpt from the New York Times article:

> The most remarkable set of connections to emerge from Tonnies's digital afterlife isn't among his online friends—it is between those friends and his parents, the previously computer-shunning Dana and Bob Tonnies. Dana, who told me that her husband now teases

her about how much time she spends sending and answering e-mail (a good bit of it coming from her son's online social circle), is presently going through *Posthuman Blues*, in order, from the beginning. "I still have a year to go," she says. Reading it has been "amazing," she continues—funny posts, personal posts, poetic posts, angry posts about the state of the world. I ask her if what she is reading seems like a different, or specifically narrow, version of her son. "Oh, no, it's him," she says. "I can hear him when I read it."

Inspiration and the creative process

Saturday, January 22, 2011

Mac Tonnies spoke to me eleven day ago, on 1-11-11. This communication was straightforward and succinct, albeit indirect. I heard his strong clear voice telling me (very nicely) to get off my sorry ass and produce a graphic novel.

This creative prodding came through in a recent essay titled *Finding Time*. It's a heartfelt piece about Mac Tonnies, synchronicity, the creative process and life.

It was published in *The Atlantic* as a follow up to the recent piece in the *New York Times*. This superior article was written by a friend of Mac's named Rita J. King, and she articulates the deep creative enthusiasm that defined our friend Mac.

The same day I read her piece, I sat at the desk and began drawing and writing. I've had a fictional story brewing in the recesses of my head for about a year, and as of now, the pen and paper have met. I'm posting this rough illustration as an overt way to publicly announcing my intention. I feel like I know my own work habits, and by declaring this stuff here, I'm a lot less likely to let this project slip away and never get done.

Thank you, Rita and Mac!

Here's an excerpt from the Atlantic article:

> Shortly before his death, Mac asked to see part of my novel. I braced myself for the fact that the excessive planning might have changed my prose and that Mac would no doubt point this out. Instead, he told me he loved it and that I should get serious about finishing it.
>
> "I don't have time," I said.
>
> "Find the time," he replied.

Text added Dec. 2018:

It wasn't long after that posting that I abandoned that graphic novel. The amount of work was monumental, and I just didn't have it in me. I am happy to say, nearly eight years later, the book has come to life again as a short novella. It's nowhere near done, but I've been motivated by Mac's terse statement, "Find the time."

Post Human Blues, is forever safe

Tuesday, July 17, 2012

This is Mac Tonnies' Post Human Blues Blog as it was captured shortly after his death. We hope future historians, the curious and his friends will read these words and grok Mac in fullness.

—Mark Plattner via PostHuman Blues.com

After Mac died, everyone who knew him asked the same question: *What is going to happen to his blog?* Nobody knew his password, so the fate of his blog was unknown. Mark Platner was a regular commenter on Mac's blog, and he's been busy capturing the content in its entirety—yes, *in its entirety*. This is a beautiful act of dedication. Mac's work now has a permanent and dedicated home, untouched by the hands of time.

There is now *PosthumanBlues.com*. The effort was monumental, and I'm forever indebted to Platner. Thank you, honestly and truly, thank you.

Posthuman Blues now available as a book

Saturday, October 27, 2012

Paul Kimball has just announced the publication of the first volume of a series of books. It's a collection of Mac Tonnies' writings from his blog. It's 382 pages long, and there will be multiple volumes coming out in the near future. It's titled: *Posthuman Blues by Mac Tonnies—volume one 2003 - 2004*, available through Red Star Books. These books are a beautiful tribute — thank you, Paul.

What sparks my imagination by Mac Tonnies

Saturday, February 6, 2016

I want to share a 3rd grade writing assignment composed by Mac Tonnies, he would have been eight years old at the time. This was sent to me by Mac's mother as a photograph of a page. It took some squinting, but I transcribed it and shared it below. His teacher, quite correctly, wrote: "Great job!" in red pen the margin. Here's his short essay:

> What Sparks My Imagination
>
> Space and dinosaurs are what I think about. When I wait in the dentist's office, I think about monsters or space. Sometimes I even take along some paper and pencils and draw at the dentist's. At home I like to draw all the time. Most every night I have a dream. One time I dreamed my toys came out of the closet and attacked me! Sometimes I can't believe how stuff like that gets in my mind.
>
> Mac Tonnies
> Grade 3

Text added March 6, 2019:

Suzanne Chancellor has been the editor of this project. We got into a working routine where she'd would review my essays at night, and send a text when she was done. I'd usually see the text the next morning and fold her suggestions into the document. We worked on this chapter over a three night period, and here's what I read this morning when I turned on my computer.

She wrote: "Mac Tonnies done"

The next text read: "I shit you not—the very second I wrote that, a great horned owl began hooting outside my window!"

Her next text included audio she'd recorded in her yard, it was the low mournful call of an owl. She then wrote: "I just said hi to Mac, in confirmation."

That message included a little emoji of a twinkling star.

5

OCTOBER

The problem is not to find the answer,
it's to face the answer.

— Terence McKenna

October of 2009

Saturday, September 18, 2010

October of 2009 stands alone as the absolute height of my synchro-mania. It felt like the world was coming unraveled, and I feared for my sanity.

It's hard to make sense of the intensity of that month. The synchronicities were unrelenting, and I was processing what was happening on the blog. I tried to write in the moment as it was unfolding. My sense of anxiety and confusion in those posts is palpable.

It was a nonstop barrage—something odd would happen, and before I could process the emotions, something else would hit me even harder. I was drowning in weirdness, one event after another, and by the time Halloween came around I was completely wrung out. I'm thunderstruck at what went down in those 31 days. This chapter is about that month.

~ ~ ~

I had a tarot reading over the phone on October 2 with investigative mythologist and author William Henry. I'd reached out to him because I was hungry for any insights into the baffling upheaval in my life.

He shuffled the deck, laid out the cards in a spread, and explained their meanings. The Reversed Death card was in the past position, "That's a very important card in the context of this reading, because you talked about the big changes. And sometimes when the reverse death card comes up, it can indicate resistance to change."

He described the Eight of Cups, "That's one of my favorite cards in the whole deck, I call it the 'Star Trek' card, because it says you are getting ready to go where you've never gone before, and that's what all of this is about—getting ready to take a whole new direction in your life. Usually it's a spiritual elevation that causes this, this is advancing to a higher spiritual level."

William described the imagery of the card. It had a ship in a harbor, and the sun was low on the horizon. He said it was unknown if the ship is arriving or leaving, or if the sun is setting or rising.

He said, “That ship is you Mike, and everything else we’ve been looking at here says your ship is getting ready to set sail.”

I said, “The detective story that I am trying to uncover is me, so this is all weirdly personal.”

He asked, “So once you uncover that, are you wanting to communicate that with people?”

This was quite a thing to ask, because that’s exactly what I’d been doing—blogging about what I’ve uncovered about myself. I went on to say the story that’s been unfolding has been very interesting.

“Okay, what would being able to communicate that story do for you?”

I said, “There are other people out there who are dealing with almost the exact same thing, and it’s equally confusing. It’s breeding anxiety in them the way it has in me, and I think I can bring a little bit of solace and peace to those folks.”

“Okay, you’re helping people get solace and peace. All we want to focus on is that. That’s the mission. Especially for the next 30 days, between now and Halloween it’s major attack time, so that’s what it’s about, and you’ll create it for yourself.”

He certainly spelled out what would happen over the rest of October. Listening to the recording was difficult. I was really struggling, and there was a desperate neediness in my voice.

What happened over the next two days was possibly the strangest event in my life. I met two women, Stacey and Marla, and this complicated story showed up on the blog immediately after it happened in a post titled *more owl weirdness.* It was briefly told again on page 120 in *The Messengers*, but the most comprehensive version is the ten pages of Chapter 5 in *Stories from The Messengers*.

The sparse recap that follows doesn’t capture the power of what took place over that weekend.

Before this chaotic event, I only had a fleeting sense that owls, UFOs and synchronicities were all somehow connected. But by Sunday afternoon, these three divergent elements were cemented together.

This rollercoaster ride began on Saturday morning, October 3, when I read Stacy’s words in a comment on a site called *Synchronicity.* She wrote: “I had the privilege to spend time in a giant owl’s ‘nest’ for lack of a better word, with over thirty barn and horned owls watching me… it was one of the most

profound moments of my life!”

I wanted to hear more, so I contacted her via email. After a few back and forth messages, she confessed she’d seen a UFO later that same day. I was flabbergasted because I hadn’t mentioned UFOs in our conversation—it was Stacey who’d brought it up. I told her this was especially strange because I had a blog focused on UFOs, owls and synchronicity.

With that, Stacy replied: “My friend Marla (who interviews for Whitley Strieber’s website) has great stories to tell… she’s tapped in.”

Hearing this was like a trap door opening under me, and I was suddenly falling. Stacey had no way of knowing I had an appointment with her close friend Marla Frees the next day.

Marla is a psychic medium. I needed help, and reached out to her in desperation. We had scheduled a session over a month earlier, and I was hoping to find some answers about what had been happening in my life.

We spoke on Sunday morning, and the intensity of this psychic reading was so overwhelming that both of us cried.

I have a single page of notes from that hour long session, and the one thing that stands out was something Marla said to me: “You are here for profound reasons.”

Later that month I spent two days driving across the desert to a weekend conference in Joshua Tree, California, hosted by Whitley Strieber and his wife Anne. I arrived on October 16 at the Joshua Tree Retreat Center, a dusty complex of buildings built by Frank Lloyd Wright and his son in the late 1940s. The architecture is beautiful, but everything is suffering after sixty years of the brutal desert sun.

An owl crossed my path along a promenade on the evening of my arrival. William Henry was there, and were able to speak in person. I also had the chance to sit with Anne Strieber, and she listened patiently while I shared some of my stories.

A few months later, Anne interviewed me on their *Unknown Country* website. This was the first episode of a series of audio conversations titled *The Contactee Interviews*. She spoke with people about their UFO experiences, focusing on the often overlooked outlying aspects of the phenomena. This remarkable program ran for almost three years, and those recordings are archived on the site.

After the conference ended, I drove into Joshua Tree National Park at

sunset. I climbed an isolated granite peak, and slept alone on its summit. It was a glorious night out under the stars. I made a plea to the universe while lying in my sleeping bag, but nothing happened. The next morning I got up, walked back to my car and drove to Los Angeles.

I met Stacey in person, and we had dinner at her apartment in Hollywood. There were more synchronicities, and some were funny! This is all told in the "Stories" book.

The next day, October 20, I was lying on the grass in a park in Pasadena when I first saw the little face in my eye. More on that later in this chapter.

On October 22, I heard that Mac Tonnies had died. I was in Moab, Utah on my way back home to Idaho. That terrible story was told in the previous chapter.

~ ~ ~

I knew I needed to try and explain the power of that month and share it on the blog, but if I wrote it all out it would end up as a big fat novel. I figured I could tell it all in a recorded podcast—this seemed like a better way to get the story out there.

It was almost a year later when I finally sat down to do an audio retelling of those 31 days. In September of 2010, I spent several late nights in a row recording and editing an audio post about the month of October, 2009. Speaking into a microphone for this podcast was emotional and time consuming. I was awash in an urgent compulsion to get these experiences out.

Beyond my verbal accounts of everything that had happened, the audio includes recorded conversations with some of the key players in the turbulent drama of that whirlwind month.

That podcast runs nearly two hours, and is linked here.

There was an evening when I was riding my bike home from a friend's house, and I knew full well that I was about to spend a late night working on that heavy-handed podcast. I was coasting downhill on a lonely rural road at sunset, when an owl gently dropped from a telephone pole above me. It glided slow and silent across my path, right at eye level, then landed on a fence post on the other side of the road. I knew immediately that this owl was linked to the podcast.

Two nights later I was riding home on my bike, this time on a different road in the valley. Again, an owl swooped across my path at eye level. And just like the previous sighting, I was on my way home to work on the same podcast.

Having two owls cross my path while on my way to edit that audio essay about my October ’09 experiences was a clear message. After that, I was imbued with an even deeper dedication to be as honest and thoughtful as possible.

The face within my eye

Tuesday, October 27, 2009

I was recently confronted with this little face,
and drew the curious image as a way to try understand what I've seen

I am writing this with a real-deal feeling of unease, because it's just so bizarre. Sharing this strange story leaves me open to justifiable claims that I'm delusional, paranoid, fantasy prone or just plain lying. As I write this, I am trying to be as honest and clear as possible.

During the summer of '08, I noticed some odd things in my vision, and an optometrist diagnosed me with a cataract within the lens of my right eye. I was 44 years old, and that's considered young for this condition. Presently it's not much of an issue, but sometimes I'll see a blurry halo around lights at night, and that's about it.

Here's how I saw the distinct image of a little face.

Last week I was lying on my back in a park in Pasadena, California. It was a lovely afternoon, the sun was shining and my face was pointed upwards to the sun. My eyes were closed and I was seeing a warm pink glow from the sunshine on my eyelids. Then I squinted and opened my eyes just slightly.

I've always been amazed at the psychedelic imagery that appears as the sunlight filters through my eyelashes. I can adjust my squinting, and watch as beautiful "lens flare" and optical "blooms" play out brilliantly in my relaxed state of concentration. Does this make sense?

The little cataract shows up when I'm squinting up at the sun, and in the last year since appearing, it's looked doughnut shaped. But on that afternoon in that park these halo blooms looked entirely different—I clearly saw the image of a little face in the center of this optical effect!

I could distinctly focus on the image, and it was much more psychedelic than the drawing posted above; there was a vivid rainbow of colors all warped in a halo around this little face. It was perfectly symmetrical left to right, which seems improbable for a tiny clump of protein in the lens of my eye.

The face looked like a human skull, and at the same time it had that big-eyed alien look. And strangely—*it looked like me*—bald with big eyes! The image even seemed to have big side burns, just like me. (This is the part where you can accuse me of being delusional!) When I do self-portraits, I always seem to draw myself with giant wide open eyes. So in a strange way, this seemed like a weirdly personal caricature.

Everything below the head was a distorted set of swirls, but to me, it looked like the tiny figure was seated in the lotus position.

Yes, I recognize how crazy this seems. Just so you know, I'm the type of person who sees faces in clouds. I have a wood ceiling above my bed, and can easily pick out lions, bunnies and human figures in the abstract lines of grain. I realize I'm creating a lot of drama around this, but it REALLY looks like a face!

A few days later I purposely laid myself down in the dust of Moab, Utah, squinted up into the sun, and it was there again, clear as can be.

Yesterday I drew the image. I laid on the floor of my living room with a clipboard and pencil, squinted my eyes and faced the sun as it shone through a window and again, I saw the same vivid little face. Actually, trying to depict this image was sort of funny. I would get the image in my field of view, then sit up and frantically draw it out. Then I'd lay down again, find the image in my eye and repeat the process. I drew it with a pencil, then later used my computer to add color. It was difficult to render, like trying to capture the sparkling refractions in the bottom of a Coke bottle.

this is my original pencil drawing,
it feels very accurate to what I could see

Every time I've looked for it, the imagery has been very clear. To see it, I need to close my left eye completely. I don't need to focus on anything, I just hold my head still, keep my gaze steady and it seems to be in focus all by itself. This isn't anything fleeting—*it's in there!*

My color drawing is about as close as I could get in my attempt to capture it. There's a colorful swirling effect from some subtle prism refraction, and I wasn't able to recreate its intensity. The real image, that only I can see, is much more psychedelic.

The expression in my drawing seems sort of gloomy, but the face I see while squinting into the sun is more neutral. The drawing is quite accurate, but I can't show anyone what I'm truly seeing, so this colorful sketch will have to suffice.

Believe me, I completely recognize I'm projecting big time with this. I mean, a tiny flaw on the lens of my eye creates a curious little face—and I write a 900 word essay on it? On some level, this is downright paranoid. I don't wanna go so far as to call it a mystical experience, but it's interesting, at least to me.

Also, I can't help but think how I'm playing the role of the fool in all of this. Believe me, I know it's unwise to look into the sun.

~ ~ ~

I was looking up at a full moon the first time I noticed the effects of the cataract in my eye, and this was more than a year before seeing the little face. I was camped near a beautiful lake in the Wind River Range in Wyoming, and got out of the tent in the middle of the night to relieve myself. I didn't check the time, but it was moments after waking from a vivid dream. It was a glorious night, and I saw an unusual blurry halo around the full moon. I'd seen similar effects before from a thin layer of clouds, but never on such a clear night. I closed one eye and then the other, and knew instantly that something was wrong with my right eye.

This was the night I'd had the funny dream about a flying saucer in my brother's garage. This dream included the palpable "distorted reality" sensations I've tried so hard to describe.

One of the causes of cataracts is ultraviolet radiation, most often from sunlight. I've found a few reports of cataracts appearing in experiencers after a close up sighting or an abduction event, the implication being something during UFO contact could damage a person's eyes.

I first noticed the visual symptoms moments after waking from a vivid UFO dream. Could there have been an unremembered contact event that generated the strange dream and also damaged my eye? I don't know, but the timing is noteworthy.

Text added Dec. 9, 2009:

I can no longer find the same image in my eyesight. I still have the effect from the cataracts in my right eye, but the little face is gone, and there's only a tiny swirling blur.

Thoughts on the image in my eye

Friday, October 30, 2009

I posted the previous story about the curious little face in my vision with a lot of trepidation. Part of the reason I posted it online, was because I knew it would've delighted Mac Tonnies. Really, he would have added a comment straight away—I *know* it. He would have said something like: "Wow, that's SO weird!"

And it is.

I realize the face I'm seeing is just a curious image caused by light as it passes through the small milky cataract in my eye, and seeing the little face is no different than seeing a teddy bear shape in a cloud. There's even a name for this, it's called pareidolia, the psychological phenomenon of seeing faces in ordinary objects. I recognize this is exactly what's happening, but the problem is *the face really looks like a face!*

I've told a lot of my friends about my curious memories, and for the most part they've all been supportive and encouraging. A few have wondered if maybe these things happen to everyone, yet for some reason I'm actually noticing them. This struck me as a very thoughtful way to address this mystery. Maybe I'm making a mistake by trying so hard to find some deeper meaning to these experiences, especially the face in my eye.

Two nights before I first noticed this weird image in my eye, I did something I do often, I slept out under the stars. I hiked into the backcountry of Joshua Tree National Park, climbed an isolated granite peak at sunset, and slept alone on its summit.

I zipped myself into my sleeping bag, then asked the universe for help. I said I was open and receptive to whatever it had to offer, and went to sleep. I've had some powerful results to this kind of request, but I awoke the next morning without remembering any dreams. Yet less than 48 hours later I saw this image, so I have to ask, was the little face in my eye an answer to my plea under the stars? Am I projecting too much meaning onto this? Undoubtedly.

I had also just spent two days at Whitley Strieber's *Dreamland Conference* at the Joshua Tree Retreat Center. William Henry gave a really cool

presentation with LOTS of images. He talked about how there are clues hidden in ancient texts and paintings, and he argued that these clues all point to the idea that *man can achieve a light-bod*y. He had multiple images of both Jesus and the Buddha in a rainbow ring, or halo—or stargate.

This little face seemed to have a very similar set of colorful rings around it, and now I'm making an analogy to this little face and Jesus. Am I spiraling into some delusional place of false self-importance? I don't think so, I just thought it was really interesting.

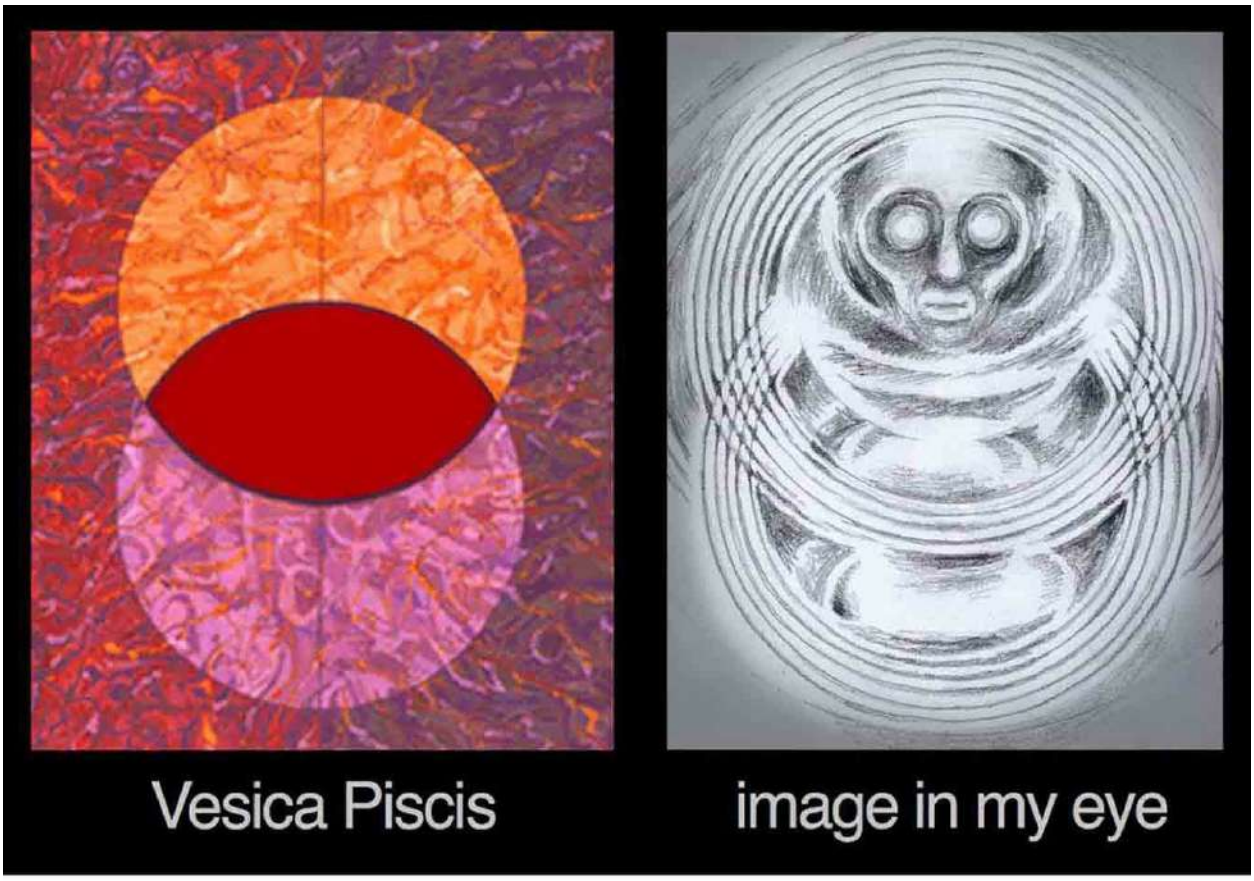
When I first saw that glimmering little face out on the grass in a park in Pasadena, my initial reaction was: "Damn! Now I'm gonna have to draw this thing and put it on my stupid blog, and everybody will think I've gone totally nuts!"

Part of me wanted to delete this post, and I almost did until I received this comment from a reader who's had a lifetime of abduction experiences. Her name is Larissa, and she wrote:

> If more people reported their personal observations of the many crazy things I suspect we all experience, I think we'd agree to collectively broaden our limitations on what constitutes sanity. As most choose silence due to fear of judgment from other human beings, our perceptions of what is normal or even possible is censored and distorted.

Sacred geometry and the face in my eye

Wednesday, May 21, 2014



The image seen in my eye is made of two halo circles that overlap

The other night I received a message from a reader who has had the kind of life events that certainly imply some sort of direct contact experiences. He noticed a pair of overlapping circles in his artwork, then found the same thing in one of my posts from four and a half years earlier; there was a very similar design element in his illustration, and the drawing I had done of the face in my eye.

The shape we'd both drawn is called the *vesica piscis*. This ancient symbol emerges when two equal sized circles overlap, creating a third form in the shape of an almond. This is an essential element within the study of sacred geometry, and I had absolutely no idea about any of this when I did my initial

pencil drawing. Here's a pragmatic definition from Wikipedia:

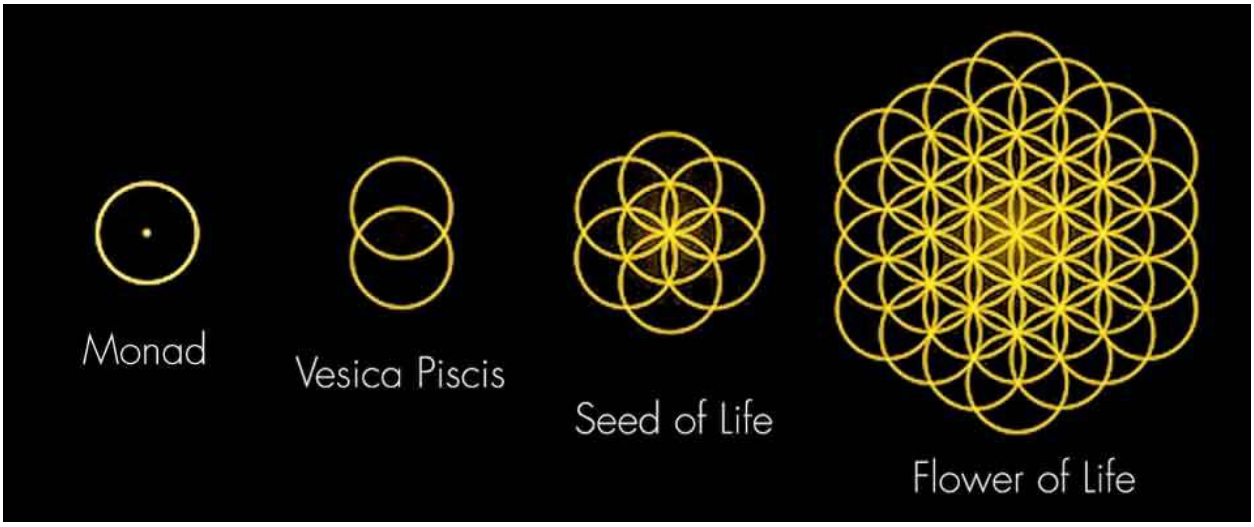
> The vesica piscis is a mathematical shape formed by the intersection of two circles with the same radius, intersecting in such a way that the center of each disk lies on the perimeter of the other.

The reader linked me to a video presentation by an artist named Charles Gilchrist (a guy with "Christ" right in his name), where he explains the history of the vesica piscis. This esoteric form shows up in a wealth of powerful symbols, including the simple Jesus fish and the more complex flower of life.

Here's a short excerpt from his introduction to sacred geometry, which is a bit more poetic than Wikipedia:

> The Circle is THE ALL! This is the essence of the mandala: The Circle holds ALL! The ancients called this archetype The Vesica Piscis. ALL FORM, literally ALL the dimensional forms of this cosmos evolve from this football like shape. The Vesica Piscis is literally the womb of the ever unfolding Mother of Sacred Geometry.

Charles Gilchrist's refers to the circle as a mandala, and how this is the foundation of sacred geometry. This leads back to another powerful event, a shared experience in 2010 with my close friend Natascha. As far as I can tell, it feels like I was abducted from a tent after both of us endured an irrational feeling of fear. Interwoven into this already weird event is an even weirder reference to a mandala and that thing in my eye.



Text added Jan. 2019:

I had been calling the floating pizza pan image I'd seen in the tent a mandala. I later read that Carl Jung referred to the mandala as a reflection of the self, and that its appearance indicates a profound re-balancing process is underway in the psyche.

Jung said, "The mandala is an archetypal image whose occurrence is attested throughout the ages. It signifies the wholeness of the Self''

A few days ago, a friend pointed out something interesting about the floating mandala image I'd seen in the tent. What I had been calling a mandala was simply a circle with a smaller circle in its center, and this is also a sacred symbol called the *monad*. I knew nothing about this until he told me.

Monad is derived from the Greek word *monas*, meaning singularity. The ancient Pythagoreans used the word to denote the first thing that came into existence. It has several equivalent meanings, including: a single source acting alone, the totality of all things, divinity, and the source. In some gnostic traditions, the monad means supreme being, the One, or the Absolute. The monad seems to represent God.

The monad is the building block of the vesica piscis. The edges of two overlapping circles touch at the dots in each of the other's center. I saw a monad, and I thought of it as the face in my eye, a symbol of myself within a vesica piscis.

My experience of floating in a tent plays out like UFO contact, and I was confronted with an ancient symbol of God. (An illustration is included in the post titled: *Irrational fear inside our tent*).

My friend who told me about the monad knows a lot about the history of occult imagery, and he's also cautiously speculated that he might have had abduction experiences. This matches the other friend who pointed out the vesica piscis imagery within the face in my eye. Two examples of ancient symbolism folded into an image that seem connected to my own probable abduction experience. Both symbols were unknown to me until friends with possible abduction experiences brought them to my attention.

These divergent threads are all tangled and overlapping, and this messy jumble seems to be a deeper clue that it's all real, at least to me. Said more simply—this stuff is weird!

Timeline

Friday, October 30, 2009

Creating this timeline began as just another blog post, a way to help anyone visiting this site navigate the mishmash of intersecting stories. But while organizing my memories I realized it was something much more introspective—it became a way to help me make sense of some deeply personal and confusing issues.

I've been adding to this list as events have unfolded.

1962 - The year of my birth, and this becomes relevant beginning in the fall of '08 when I met several people my age with similar histories and experiences.

The early 1970s - I had a LOT of bloody noses during my youth, especially between the ages of 8 to about 14. I clearly remember one morning when I woke up with my pillow soaked with a ridiculous amount of blood. I thought to myself, how did I sleep through this and not wake up?

1974 - I saw a "coffee can" shaped object with my friend Kenny. I don't know the exact date, but I feel pretty certain it was in '74.

Autumn 1974 - The orange flash and missing time event in my neighborhood. This experience is the crux of the overall mystery. There are spider webs running from this event that seem to connect everywhere.

Mid-70s - I read *Flying Saucers - Serious Business* by Frank Edwards, the first "big" book I read from beginning to end—the second was *Jaws*.

1981 - I moved from a suburb in Michigan to New York City. I was 19 years old, and a freshman at NYU Film School (I dropped out a year later). This was a tremendously exciting time in my life.

1986 - I spent a winter in Jackson Hole Wyoming as a ski bum. This will deeply influence my life path. I then spent the next few years moving back and forth between the Rockies and NYC.

1987 - I saw Whitley Strieber's book *Communion*. My response was curiosity, and a lot of skepticism. My initial reaction to the face on the cover was "that's not quite right." I didn't read the book until the summer of 1992.

1991 - I picked up a trade paperback titled *UFO Casebook* by Kevin D. Randle. I lost this book years ago, but it started me on a compulsive reading frenzy on the subject that continues to this day.

1992 through 1999 - In December of 1992, I was diagnosed with severe clinical depression, and spent the next seven years on anti-depressant medications. I used these years to do a lot hard work and deep self-examination. The metaphor of death and rebirth is entirely appropriate. I feel I emerged at the other end a much healthier person.

Jan. or Feb. 1993 - I awoke in the middle of the night to see five figures out my bedroom window. The experience was dreamlike, and could be easily dismissed. I drew an image in an attempt to make sense of the memory, and that unleashed even more questions.

Nov. 1993 - I moved to a small town in rural Idaho.

March 1994 - I had an unknown ailment resulting in approximately one third of my large intestine being surgically removed. This was a difficult set back physically, followed by a few years of deeply challenging emotional issues.

Mid to late 90s - I'm drawn to decidedly new-age topics. I began reading about UFOs, modern physics, religious studies and environmentalism. I also read a lot of books on channeling.

Aug. 2002 - I visit a crop circle in the nearby town of Teton, Idaho.

2002 through 2006 - Somewhere in the first few years of this century, I

become obsessed with doing a documentary on the subject of UFO abductions. I subscribe to Netflix and begin watching documentaries on UFOs—and most of 'em are lousy.

Sept. 2006 - I have the multiple owl experience (twice) with Kristen in the Tetons. The owl weirdness begins.

Oct. 2006 - I write up the simple proposal for a documentary on UFO abductions, and a local producer says: "Let's do it."

Winter 2006 / 2007 - I have a very vivid dream relating to the documentary. Because of the intense metaphoric imagery in this dream, I say yes to looking deeper into my memories, and decide to use my real name.

Aug. 2007 - Production starts on the documentary, and a small team and myself begin to shoot video footage.

Oct. 2007 - I met with Budd Hopkins, and share a story he describes as, "Confirmation anxiety." I create a long essay to attempt to describe the confusing emotions.

Nov. 2007 - I attend my first UFO conference in Las Vegas. Over the next few years I go to a bunch more conferences, and find them to be very helpful.

Feb. 2008 - I attend the eight day UFO Congress in Laughlin, Nevada and meet Natascha.

Spring 2008 - During this time, the documentary seems to stall out. Everyone involved still believes in the project (myself included), but there is no longer any momentum.

Feb. 2009 - I attend the Laughlin UFO conference. I am in a place of deep anxiety and soul searching. This is not a peaceful time for me. I meet Miriam Delicado, and she encourages me to speak out more.

March 3, 2009 - I start this blog the day returning home from the Laughlin

conference. The initially posts are about simple synchronicities, I was scared to share any stories with implications of UFO abduction.

March 13, 2009 - I was preparing to post my missing time experience from 1974, but was frightened by the implications of sharing a story that implied UFO abduction. At that moment, I received an email from a childhood friend, Cindy. This is relevant to the story, and the synchronistic timing was mind-boggling. I cannot overstate the power of this event, and how it pushed me off a cliff.

From this point on, everything felt decidedly different.

Spring 2009 - My life during these months was extremely difficult and emotional, and this parallels the genesis of my blog. My anxiety isn't hidden, it's obvious in a lot of the posts during this turbulent time. I'm not sure why I was so compelled to share so much in this very public forum.

July 29, 2009 - I have a very intense synchronicity where another person associated with the missing time event from 1974 reappears in my life. Again, the timing is simply too exact to dismiss.

Summer 2009 - I saw a LOT of owls. The overwhelming volume of owl sightings is extremely strange, and goes way beyond simple coincidence. I get the sense they are trying to get me to wake up.

Starting in 2009 - I see the numbers 1-2-3-4-5 in a series of ongoing synchronicities. This ends up becoming sort of ridiculous.

Autumn 2009 - Synchronicities seem to intensify, and I've been slowly and constantly shedding my doubts about the reality of my experiences. Some of these heavy-handed coincidences are profound, and I can no longer deny something very real is happening. The month of October was a frenetic descent into synchro-overload!

Oct. 20, 2009 - Mac Tonnies dies peacefully in his apartment in Kansas City. The world loses one of its great thinkers, and I lose a friend whom I'd never

met.

Halloween 2009 - I have a six hour phone conversation with a woman named Anya, and during the call she channeled information from her guides. This came on the heels of a very intense month. My level of acceptance begins to change—awakening would be an appropriate way to describe this experience.

Feb. 5, 2010 - I have a very vivid dream that foreshadows events in Laughlin, Nevada. I record the dream, then I see a grapefruit sized blue orb floating in my bedroom. Natascha and I spend 10-days together after not seeing each other for two years.

March 2010 - I get another dose of synchro-weirdness when I start putting lines on a map after seeing photos of owls in Missouri. This is told in the chapter titled: *The Map*.

May 2010 - Natascha and I experience something terribly distressing late at night in a tent. This has been my only experience of profound fear. The events also yield a curious scratch, and a follow-up sweat lodge ceremony on the Navajo reservation.

June 2011 - I wrote a post with a photo of a small triangular scar on my forearm. I don't know what it is, or where it came from. I remember it clearly as a boy in the mid 70's. This one post has generated a more hits than anything else on the blog, and I assume people are searching the web to find answers about their own odd scars.

March 10, 2013 - I experienced something very strange while sleeping under the stars in southern Utah, culminating in two posts on the same day. The first is a rather dry report of my memories and impressions. The second post is far stranger, and shows three events all lined up on a map. The urge to create the map came from a very real psychic knowing that I have only occasionally. This knowing is always connected to the reality of UFO events in my life.

March 22, 2013 - I post an essay titled, *I now know*. I just couldn't deny the

obvious anymore. These events are described in a chapter titled, *My confirmation event*. I wrote:

> I am now unable to cling to that former identity of *not knowing*. I now know. I am directly intertwined with the UFO reality.

July 2013 - I post a long format essay titled *Owls and the UFO Abductee*. This is similar in tone (and conclusion) to a previous essay titled: *Synchronicity and the UFO Abductee*. Both these reports define my research as well as my personal journey. They are archived on my blog as PDF documents.

Feb. 2014 - I gave a presentation at the International UFO Congress, a large conference in Arizona. I stood on stage, sharing my owl research and personal experiences. The presentation was well-received by the attendees. This was a huge deal for me!

Dec. 2014: - I move from Idaho to upstate New York to be with my partner Andrea.

Dec. 3, 2015 - My big book about owls is published. *The Messengers* is partly my owl research, and partly my personal experiences.

Feb. 17, 2018 - The companion to the first owl book is published. *Stories from The Messengers* is a collection of 19 stories, each is an example of the complexities that accompany the owl and UFO experience.

Nov. 2017 - I have a hypnotic regression with Mary Rodwell in New Hampshire. My hope was to explore unremembered UFO experiences. The story that emerged was emotional and distressing.

July 2, 2018 - The audio book of *Stories from The Messengers* is published, read by the author.

Aug. 2018 - I have a hypnotic regression with Yvonne Smith in Los Angeles.

The story that emerged was nearly identical to the session with Mary Rodwell the previous year.

Spring 2019 - The book *Collected Writings from Hidden Experience* is published. This is the book you are reading now.

Believing vs Knowing

Saturday, October 10, 2009

During the last few weeks I've been at the receiving end of a singular message. I'm being told the same thing over and over and over. There's been an intense cast of characters who've shown up in my life (and I've even paid a few for psychic readings), and each one has been hitting me over the head with the same message.

Here's what I've been hearing: *I need to move on, and quit wallowing in my wishy-washy state of self-doubt. I need to deal with this. The time of wavering is over.*

It feels like the universe is no longer nudging me to change—it's kicking me!

Miriam Delicado shared her insights during our audio interview, she said: "I went through that stage for a really long time. Is this real? Is it happening? What does it mean? It's a real denial that you have to get over at some point. And you eventually come into a really calm clearness over your experiences and what it is that you know within yourself. That's the beauty of it, it forces you to look at all those different areas of who you are."

Then I asked: "And when is this gonna happen? I'm very eager for this!" And we both laughed.

This was followed by a Tarot reading with gifted researcher, William Henry. He spoke in metaphor (something that I really love) using the imagery from the upturned Tarot cards as a way to visualize where I am in my life right now, and to emphasize the change that's required.

William described the images on each of the cards, and how they represented me and my life; like a ship leaving a harbor, a sunrise, the birth canal, and a caterpillar leaving its cocoon. He summed up my reading (in true new age terms) by saying *it was time to change my resonance*.

Last night I spoke on the phone with David Huggins, a friend and lifelong experiencer. We spoke at length about the difference between *believing* and *knowing*. David speaks slow and calm, and he carefully described a personal turning point in his life journey.

He feels that believing is a cushion, something that pads him from a

deeper experience. He talked about how simply *believing* was somehow incomplete, and it created anxiety in his life. There came a point of change, he understood his experiences were real, and entered a phase of *knowing.* Since that fundamental shift, his life has been much more peaceful. This was really moving for me, and I don't know if he realized how much I needed to hear him share his feelings.

Then came the frenzied back and forth emails between me and Stacey last Saturday, a week to the day as I write this. This was a whack across my head, because gentle prodding wasn't working. (This complex story is told in Chapter Five in *Stories from The Messengers.*)

Here's what I wrote to Stacey later in the week, "I saw an owl tonight while on my bike in town. It crossed my path."

Stacey replied to me: "Yes, going from believing to knowing is a milestone. I have no idea when that moment was for me. I no longer 'believe', *I know*, and this the difference… I am so thankful for every day."

I'd been at the receiving end of a torrent of powerful synchronicities, and everything seemed to culminate with a psychic reading with Marla Frees. We spoke on the phone for over an hour last Sunday, and our session could be its own novel. She was very clear that I needed to move on. I need to accept all this stuff. Things that, deep down, I already know. *This time of uncertainty needs to end.*

I spent last week in a state of deep self-examination. I'm aware that these ongoing synchronicities, the theme of this entire blog, all seem to be nudging me (or kicking me) in one singular direction: *To move beyond a mode of thinking that no longer serves me.*

All of this implies that there is something before me, just one step further down the path. Something that I'm capable of embracing, and that can change me. But what that might be, I truly don't know.

Anya is a Channel

Sunday, November 1, 2009

Late on Friday night, I noticed a new addition to the short list of followers on my blog. There was a little avatar of a woman's face that I hadn't seen before, and the moment I saw her tiny image there was a strong sense that this was somehow deeply important. I'm serious—this feeling was palpable.

I clicked on her face, and it linked me to her blog, *Anya is a Channel*. It's loaded with a bunch of YouTube videos; most of them are a close up of her face as she speaks to her computer, smiles, and begins channeling. Anya has a really funny way of speaking for *Them* (whoever that might be)—she'll furrow her brow, question things, then laugh. It's obvious there's a lotta banter going on in her head, and it's all intertwined with amusing wordplay.

I stayed up late and watched them all, some of them twice.

I'll add that I went through a chapter of my life in the 90s when I'd immersed myself in channeled information. I have a shelf loaded with these books, so I feel I have a pretty good foundation into this fringe material.

The next morning I sent Anya an email via her blog, minutes later she replied with her phone number—and I called immediately.

We talked for the next SIX HOURS!

Both of us burned through multiple phone batteries, then we'd frantically call each other back on another line.

We've each adopted New York as our home town (even though I currently live in Idaho), so it felt normal to talk in rapid fire fervor, jumping from subject to subject. We would unashamedly confront the other about the deepest stuff. Niceties were ignored—we really went for it!

She would drift in and out of her own voice, and lapse into channeling. The overlapping got confusing, it eventually evolved into a sort of three way conversation between myself, Anya and *Them*. I tried to stay totally open and take it all in, like a sponge—or maybe a vacuum.

I would share my strange life experiences, then Anya would interrupt and interject from her guides. She (or more accurately, *They*) explained what was going on beyond my perceptions, and a lot of exacting details were imparted—stuff about myself Anya simply could *not* have known.

As I’m writing this, I fully recognize I just got hit with a great big whammy, and my head is still ringing like a gong. I feel like a cartoon character that gets hit with a frying pan, and their head vibrates for a few extra beats. I’ll need to let this fire settle down before I can attempt to organize my thoughts and emotions.

And yes, I know full well not to believe all this information without some critical thinking. Channeling is suspect, true enough, but I was completely open. How can critical thinking and channeling find a happy meeting place? The logical side of my brain screams it’s impossible, but my heart says the opposite.

The call went on and on and on. I laughed and cried. She egged me on and chided me. Lots went down, more than I can write here.

Anya channeled *Them* on my present state: “You are doing great. Good student, A plus, well done, they are patting you on the head, good work, they are happy.”

Our intense six hour phone call ended with a sort of summation from *Them* about me. Anya channeled: “There is a reason this session was so long—we are awakening you. Your DNA is growing, it’s changing, because of this call. You are being transformed, awakened and stimulated to your real purpose. You are a starseed, and this is your time to wake up.”

Researching myself

Monday, November 2, 2009

This short essay is full of speculation and deep personal examination, and I'm leaving myself wide open for anyone to question my sanity. I'm stating this up front, so I don't need to dance around what I wanna say. I'm just gonna say it.

~ ~ ~

At a recent UFO conference in California, I told fellow attendee that I was doing research. He asked, "Oh really? What are you researching?"

I thought for a moment, then replied, "Well, I guess I'm researching myself."

That was a perfectly honest answer.

How's this research coming along? I'm not sure if I can answer that, because I have no idea what I'm interacting with.

I feel like I'm grappling with the big questions. Who am I? Why am I here? What does it all mean?

So much has happened in the last few weeks—the power of the synchronicities and intensity of the experiences have been over the top. Looking back at the last few years, it feels like I've been dealing with some sort of an incremental induction. I'm moving, little by little, into a place of utter weirdness.

Something has been working hard to get my attention, and it has freaked me out. But at the same time, it seems like it's being careful not to totally break me. Whatever is happening, there's something about it that's intensely personal.

It's playing out in a way that seems tailored to fit some deep part of my psyche. I'm amazed at how precisely the events are unfolding, one after the other. Each experience is opening me up, just a little bit more.

The heart-warming story about the grocery store checkout girl was like being tickled.

The funny story about the bottle of Neutrogena 45 was like being poked.

The beautiful story of Cindy Gail arriving in my life was like being slapped in the face (it was a nice slap, really).

And all the forceful events of the last month were a lightning bolt to my psyche. It would be fair to call it a revelation, but it felt more like a collapse from exhaustion.

I can't help but be impressed with the steady and systematic escalation of these experiences. Along the way I've changed and evolved. I'm not the same person I was just a few years ago.

There is no subject I find more challenging than the trappings of the new age movement, but I have been escorted (or dragged?) to a place where I now consult psychics and channelers (I'm wearing a crystal around my neck as I write this). This is the kind of stuff I would've dismissed with contempt just a short while ago, but I'm here now, and quite willingly.

Who knows what the future will bring? I'd like to think I'm self-aware enough to walk away from any of these things if it feels like they're not working for me. If this blogging format seems unnecessary, I'll drop it.

This focused self-examination began with my foggy UFO memories. I made a declaration in the winter of 2006—I said YES to looking at my experiences. I had an idea of how this might unfold, but it hasn't happened that way. It's been much stranger and much more personal than I could have ever imagined. This process, the act of saying YES, has been extremely challenging—and the last three years have been *really* hard.

Why does that little image of a face in my vision seem so important? No one can see it but me. If I wasn't a skilled illustrator, it would be impossible for me to share. But I am, and I did draw it, and shared it with the world. And believe me, I know how strange that is.

I saw a lot of owls this summer, and it felt like the logical side of my head could dismiss these sightings as nothing but chance. But after the incredible interactions with Stacey and her story of owls and a UFO, logic just doesn't seem to fit anymore. I never would have met Stacey if it hadn't have been for all those owls; they played an important role. The owls got tangled up with UFOs, and it all culminated in a mind-blowing phone call with a gifted psychic.

These bizarre events can wig me out, true enough, but they also leave me fascinated. Something is happening, and I'll probably never be able to truly define it.

My head has been cracked open, and I’m trying to be receptive and ready for whatever the universe offers me next. I might fail or lose my mind—or I may gain some new insights.

And hopefully I can share what I find.

Head vs Heart

Monday, November 9, 2009

I had a conversation with a friend from college. He knew I had a blog on the topics of UFOs, and he read through a handful of posts. The content was different than he'd expected, and he said, "It reads like you are on a spiritual journey."

I replied, "I know, because I am!"

~ ~ ~

I feel like I've been exploring my oppressive self-doubt throughout the short history of this blog. I've been earnestly looking into myself, and it's been *very* interesting. This online format needs to remain deeply personal. Am I wallowing in the self-reflection of my own inflated ego? Maybe. Probably.

When I started this blog, I was afraid to share the really weird stuff, so the first bunch of posts were just nice stories with pleasant synchronicities. The first really difficult one for me to post was an experience in 1974 involving two hours of missing time, along with an odd orange flash in the sky.

At first I wasn't brave enough to post it online—the implications of that story just *screamed* UFO abduction. It was all written up, but I was lost in self-doubt. It took an unbelievable event to get me to take the big dive, and it happened when I received an email from an elementary school friend named Cindy. Her reappearance in my life was absolutely magical—the timing of her email was too intense to be a coincidence.

The logical side of my brain was telling me NOT to post that story. It screamed at me: What about the implications? You have no proof, and anyway—*it's impossible!*

But my heart was telling me something miraculous had happened, and I posted that story—and then a whole bunch more equally impossible stories.

I've been able to talk about some of these memories for a long time, maybe ten years or so, but I didn't truly believe my own story, and its implications. I could discuss each event in a logical framework of other

experiences reported in the UFO literature, and I could remain cool and level headed. But it felt like my personal disclaimers were wearing thin, and this denial had created some very real tensions. Something *had* to snap.

The best advice I've ever received as I've descended into this nutty realm of paranormal weirdness was to keep an open mind, yet I'm skeptical and cautious about the core subjects of this blog. I've been grappling with UFOs, vivid dreams, synchronicities, channeled information, psychic readings, foggy memories, and owls.

The mystery is seductive, and I know it.

Here's where I get lost—is it *literal* truth, or is it *metaphorical* truth? I have no idea, but I know that *something* is happening.

Personally, literal truth is like trying to look at a locomotive train under a microscope, and metaphorical truth is like the rainwater in a forest. I am an artist, NOT a scientist. I'm learning to trust my gut, even as the pragmatic side of my brain is in revolt.

I am dealing with paranormal experiences, and if I try to scrutinize them with the pragmatic side of my brain, I get stuck and distressed. It hampers me, and makes me miserable.

It's been much more useful to deal with this stuff from my heart. Whenever I do, I benefit enormously. I'm learning to trust my heart.

I can't define or defend my feelings on this—all I can say is that the feelings are real, and I can't ignore it. To dismiss these paranormal experiences makes perfect sense logically, but logic is a tool that can only take you so far before stalling out in a place of confusion.

My heart simply won't let me dismiss the really strange stuff, just because it's really strange. Something VERY real is happening, and it's entirely beyond logic.

That said, my logical side is absolutely perplexed.

New text added Sept. 1, 2012:

This post was written barely a week after the heady month of October 2009. This 31-day stretch was absolutely life altering.

6

THE MAP

It is sometimes an appropriate response to reality to go insane.

— Philip K. Dick

Lotsa owls in Missouri

Tuesday March 9, 2010

14 owls in one photo

28 owls in one photo (double the number from above)

I'm sharing two amazing owl photos from south west Missouri. One picture shows twenty-eight short-eared owls all lined up on a fence!

There's also a series of incredible videos from that same event. I've been in contact with the photographer, Tony Harrison. He posted a short clip on YouTube (linked here) and wrote: "This video doesn't do the sighting justice. There were probably more than 200 in the area."

I received the link to these remarkable images from a fellow named Jim.

He wrote a funny owl post on the *Synchro Secrets* site in 2009, and his story opened chapter five in *Stories from The Messengers*—and he's also from Idaho!

One more thing happened today, I received a copy of Mac Tonnies' book *The Cryptoterrestrials*. I wrote a short post announcing this amazing addition to the UFO literature, and added it alongside the owl pictures.

A line on a map

Wednesday, March 10, 2010

a funny red marker in a farmer's field defines Byron, North Dakota

Sometimes I worry I've gone completely insane, and this post is an example of the out-and-out weirdness that leaves me utterly perplexed. Perhaps the easiest conclusion is that I'm just plain nuts. Yet this little story is *very* interesting, at least to me. There is a yellow line in these map images, and it's either magic or folly.

First, I need to share some information that came from Anya Briggs. She told me some things in a channeled session back in early November 2009. I recorded it, and Anya, or more correctly her guides, were giving me some health advice about alfalfa supplements when she abruptly changed the subject, she blurted out: "…Is there a Bryon, Wyoming or North Dakota?"

She seemed surprised and spelled it out, "B-R-Y-O-N." Then she laughed and said, "Bryon, or something that sounds like that, this is confusing!"

Anya went through some rather comical attempts to make sense of what her guides were trying to tell her. Eventually she narrowed it down to Bryon, North Dakota. I googled it right then during our session, but misspelled Bryon as Byron.

Only one thing came up, a map with a funny red pushpin in the middle of some farmer's field. I zoomed out and saw it was close to the Canadian border. I told her this and she let out a big laugh.

Yesterday I created two blog posts, the first featured the super cool owl photographs. The second was about the arrival of Mac Tonnies' book. It seemed funny that both posts came from Missouri. Mac Tonnies lived in Kansas City, and those beautiful owl pictures were taken somewhere in south west part of the state.

I was curious if these two locations were close to each other. I used Google Maps to put a yellow pushpin marker on Kansas City. Then I put a blue pushpin marker on the road about halfway between the two small towns of Greenfield and Lockwood, this was a guess, but it matched the written description in the article. I checked and the two pushpins were 123 miles apart. Be aware, I take a special notice whenever the numbers 123 show up.

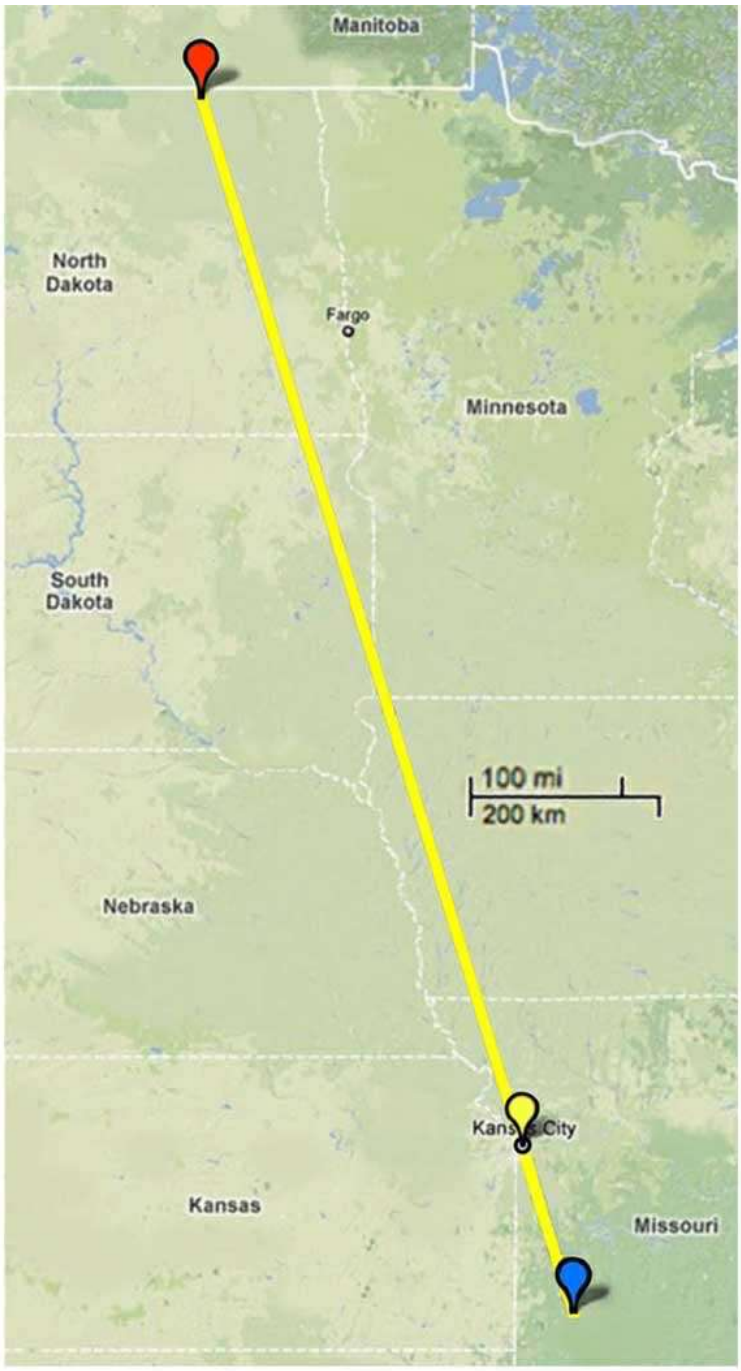
What happened next was odd, it felt like I was on auto-pilot. I widened out the image on Google Maps so I could see the red pushpin that marked Byron, North Dakota. Then I took a plastic ruler and set it against my computer monitor, and the three pushpins lined up exactly in a straight line. Now, this is where things get weird, and I need to say this—I knew they would line up even before I started, and it freaked me out. But it wasn't their alignment that scared me, it was the absolute *knowing* ahead of time.

I used the tools on Google Maps to create a straight yellow line. The process was tricky and it took a little time to figure out. There are 835 miles between the red pushpin noting Byron North Dakota and the blue pushpin down where the owl pictures were taken in Missouri, and the straight yellow line cleanly bisects Kansas City.

I typed in Mac's address into Google Maps, and zoomed. His apartment was less than 500 feet from the yellow line, and that's remarkably close, but I was disappointed. I wanted that straight line to pass directly over his home.

Again, don't ask me why, but before I began I had a clear *knowing* that I was going to find a 17 degree line. After the three points were all marked out I set a protractor on my screen, and the line comes in at 17 degrees in relation to the latitude.

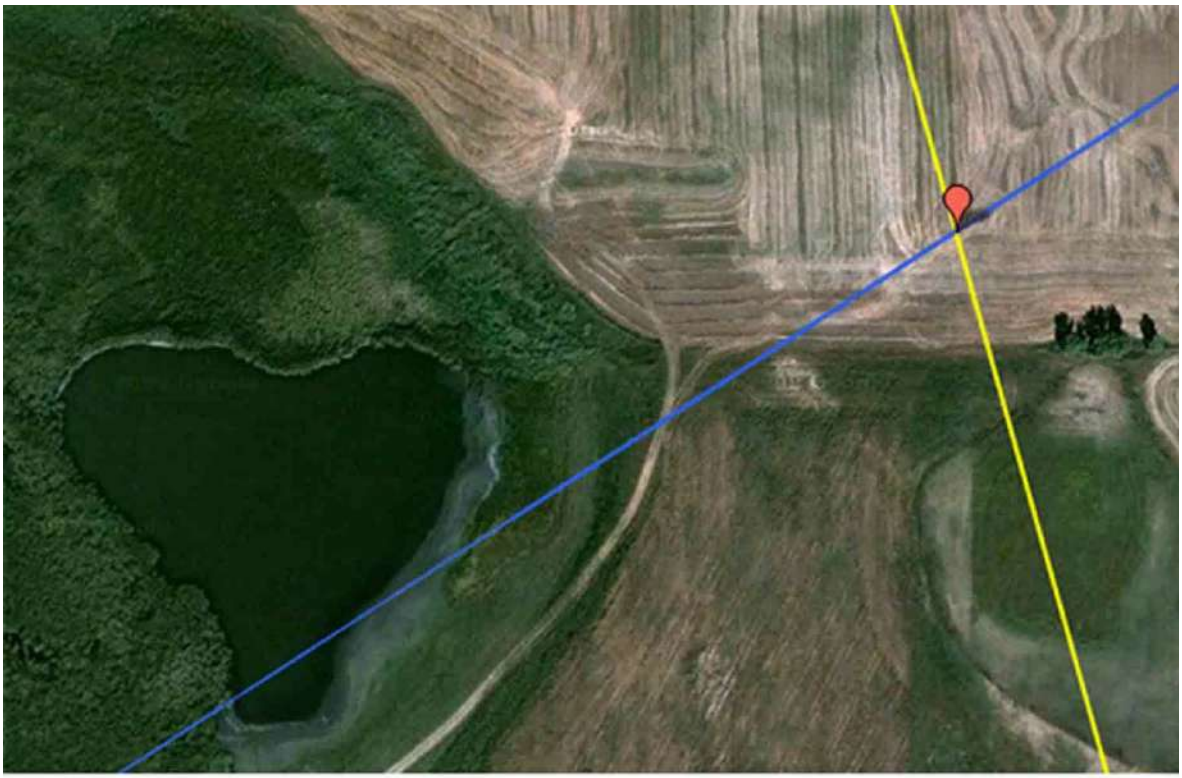
The spark of the idea to lay that plastic ruler against my computer screen came from Stace Tussel. I was directly inspired by her straight line on a map of Kansas. Please watch this very curious video linked here. I met Stace in the Teton crop circle, the eighth post on this blog.



Byron in RED, Kansas City in YELLOW,
and those owls in BLUE,
all along one very straight line

Byron North Dakota & Anya Briggs

Friday, March 12, 2010



Follow that yellow line 820 miles and it ends at the mysterious owl location in central Missouri, bisecting Mac's apartment along the way. The blue line is even stranger.

The previous post was long and wordy. I was trying to describe a channeled session with Anya Briggs and its implications. My intent was to be as clear as possible, but this whole thing is very complicated. The psychic reading was recorded, so I posted an audio excerpt on the blog to help explain this curious map stuff. The audio has some extra comments, but it's mostly Anya and I trying to make sense out of the channeled messages—and it's funny!

The audio of the psychic session is linked here.

When Anya (or more correctly, her guides) told me to visit Byron, North Dakota during our session back in early November, the whole thing seemed exciting—but also utterly strange. In the last few months, its importance had sort of faded away, but this line on the map pushed it right back into the

forefront of something to pursue! Whatever is going on, Byron, North Dakota seems to be a pivotal place in this conundrum

Here's some more weirdness. If you listen to the audio, the first thing Anya asks: *"Is there a BRYON Wyoming or North Dakota?"*

The word *Byron* and *Bryon* get mixed up somewhere in the process. I have my paper notes from that session, and they clearly read Byron. So, Anya said Bryon, and I wrote down Byron. I typed Byron into Google as a way to search out what it might mean, so I was the one who made the curious switch-a-roo with the two letters. This kind of spelling mix-up is common for me.

When I searched the incorrect spelling, the little pushpin appeared in a lonely field. I pointed out the change to Anya in an email, and she replied:

> Well, spelling and hearing gets messed up in the translation sometimes… Odds are I heard the name wrong… Replace the Y with the R and it's the same spot. I was telling you 'in North Dakota', so that's probably the same place they were referring to. You know this happens in channeling, it's not an exact science! Why ya bustin' my chops, 'eh?

The last few years have been mind-boggling, and its left me totally distraught. I can wallow in the drama of that feeling, and get stuck in a tape-loop. There's a sense of urgency to all of this, and it can be unbearable.

This map weirdness has consumed me, and I suspect there will be a day when I make a pilgrimage to that lonely field in North Dakota. Yet despite my obsessive research, I had no idea what Byron actually was; it wasn't a city or county, and searching Google just showed a lonely pushpin in a farmer's field.

It took some digging, but I eventually figured out that Byron is one of 41 townships in Cavalier County, North Dakota. Google must have just plunked it there to mark the middle of a bureaucratic boundary.

An hour after posting the text above:

Okay, even more weirdness. I just received a note from an online acquaintance, telling me there is also a Byron, Wyoming. The moment I read those words *I absolutely knew what was going to happen next.*

I used Google Maps and found the very little town of Byron, Wyoming, and connected it to Byron, North Dakota with a blue line. Next, I stretched that straight line further west and it passes right though my little cabin in

Idaho—and I mean, *EXACTLY!*

This is a big deal, and I need to explain it carefully. This new line is 690 miles long, and the easternmost point is the red pushpin in Byron, North Dakota, and the westernmost point is my cabin in Idaho. This straight line passes right through the town of Byron, Wyoming and runs over a parallel section of the Shoshone River, less than 800 feet from the main street.

These three points line up in a perfectly straight line, culminating at my home.

Here's the part that is SO strange—*I absolutely knew this was going to happen the moment I read there was a town in Wyoming called Byron!*

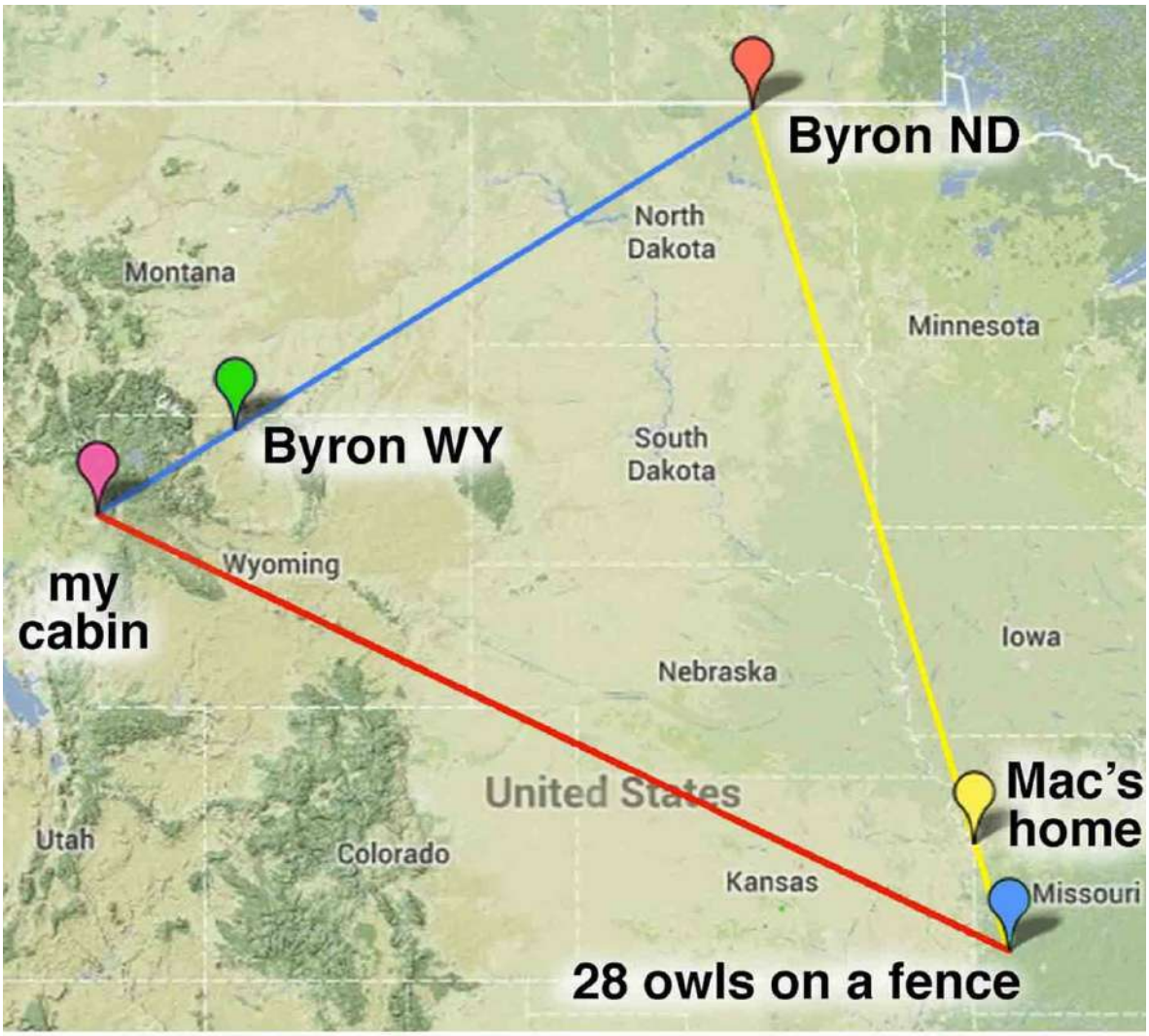
I put this line on the map and it cut directly through each key point—and I am NOT kidding—I absolutely KNEW it would point to my house. I absolutely KNEW it about the other line too, the fence with 28 owls up to Byron North Dakota, I knew this line would be very close to Mac's apartment in Kansas City.

Don't ask me what any of this means—but please believe me, I am NOT exaggerating—*I knew it before it happened both times*.

It felt like the floor dropped out from under me. I can't help but think that the razor sharp blue line is pointing directly at me.

This whole thing has been both spellbinding, and rewarding. Believe me, it's still confusing, but it's exciting too, like the irresistible drama of a mystery novel.

I showed the maps to Anya Briggs and explained my sense of absolute knowing. She said: "That is freaky deaky that the line goes straight through your home… Well, I guess it ain't over yet, bub! They came through strong just now. You are on quite the treasure hunt!"



a giant triangle on a map

I put a red line across the bottom of the map to complete the triangle. I scrutinized this new line for anything, and only one point seemed significant. The line crossed through a city park in Wyoming, and this was the site of an emotional memorial for a young friend.

Extra text added March 13, 2010:

Yesterday afternoon I was using Google Maps to fine tune the long yellow line stretching down from the pushpin in Byron, North Dakota. I took my time, zoomed in close and carefully positioned all the points—but the accuracy of the yellow line is dependent on the location of the owl photos. At

present, I don’t know precisely where they were, but I’m workin’ on it!

I set the yellow line over Mac’s apartment, then let it run 123 miles southeast. The southern point of the line ends up roughly in the area described in the article with the owl pictures, about halfway between the towns of Greenfield and Lockwood, Missouri.

My phone rang during this compulsive work. It was Mac Tonnies’ mother, calling to thank me for the illustrations in his book. We had a very touching conversation, and she shared a lot with me about her son. We spoke for over a half hour, and I was filled with gratitude.

Update on the yellow line on the map

Friday, March 26, 2010

I just received a paper letter from Faren Fite, who was with Tony Harrison when he took those beautiful owl photographs in Missouri. Faren wrote: “Yes, it was amazing. I have seen many things in my life, but the owls were one of the most wonderful… There would have been more pictures, but I didn’t realize what I was looking at until I had passed many of them.”

Faren sent me a map with the exact location of the owl sighting, approximately four miles north of the very small town of Lockwood Missouri. I could see the farmer’s fence on the Google Maps satellite imagery, and this was about two miles west of where I’d assumed it was after seeing his owl photos.

I moved the southern end of the yellow line to the exact site of the owls, and this changed the razor sharp precision noted in an earlier posting. The line no longer runs through Mac’s apartment in Kansas City, it’s now a little less than two miles to the west. That’s still pretty close, but not as precise as the previous image.

The owls were seen near an area noted on the map as “Gray’s Valley.” These weren’t great gray owls, but were short eared owls. They weren’t gray aliens, either.

Mysterious star map?

Friday, April 9, 2010

While in the obsessive throes of this map weirdness, my cat knocked a full cup of coffee off my desk, and it fell on the floor with a messy splash. When I looked over the edge of my desk, I saw a splattered a bunch of coffee speckles on a page of map notes I'd left on the floor.

My first reaction was: "Wow, this looks like a constellation—is this a star map?"

There was something captivating about the new image. I spent a lot of time trying to find some correlation to the coffee polka-dots on that paper, and the Pleiades constellation. The dots certainly resembled it, but not exactly, yet I *wanted* them to. After awhile I recognized my neediness, and realized this was a little bit fanatical—even for me.

Text added Dec. 2018:

"As I dig into this, I'm using Google Maps the way a mystic might use a deck of tarot cards. I'm trying not to second guess the outcome of the information." I wrote that in the midst of the map weirdness back in 2010.

At that point Google Maps was simple, yet slightly inaccurate. The maps were all set up as a sort of expanded Mercator projection— for example, Wyoming was a perfect rectangle. But the Earth is round, so putting perfectly straight lines on a map isn't really possible, especially over a long distance. Presently, Google Maps is much more sophisticated. If you zoom out from an image, you'll eventually see a globe floating in space. I re-checked the lines of the giant triangle in 2018, and the alignments are no longer perfect.

.

Three days in the Pryor Mountains

December 2018

There's a story from the summer of 2012, and it's an important part of the overall narrative of the giant triangle on the map. I'm surprised nothing about it was ever posted on the blog back then, so I've written it up for this book.

~ ~ ~

At some point amidst the flurry of these posts, I received a note from a reader who noticed something from the November '09 channeled session with Anya Briggs. The fellow had listened to the audio link on my site, and pointed out some specific details. Anya had said some interesting things:

> A town called Bryon. Are you close to the border of Wyoming? They're saying over the border in Wyoming, Bryan Wyoming. They are saying in Bryon. They are looking at land mass, they are just showing me this butte, okay? I don't know why they are saying butte? Okay, it's a physical Butte, it's not Butte, Montana we are talking about.
>
> They're saying if you go 15 miles outside of Wyoming, near the North Dakota border? (said as a question)
>
> On the left side of the bank of the hill. *You're gonna find us there*, that's one of our hotspots. They are saying 10 to 15 miles north of there, you have to fudge with that a little bit. This is a test for you, they are laughing!

The Canadian border is about 15 miles north of the pushpin for Pryor, North Dakota. I had been focused on this site, but it didn't lead to anything.

I received an email from a reader of the blog. The message pointed out that the Montana border is 15 miles north of Pryor, Wyoming, and rising out of the plains 15 miles further north is the Pryor Mountains. Anya had said, "it's a physical Butte" and that matches the terrain. She also said, "*You're gonna find us there*."

For the Crow nation, this is the traditional home of the Little People. When I read this, I knew I'd go there someday.

I've spent years camping in this part of the west, and have spoken with a few folks who've said they've seen the Little People. One friend told me he saw a tiny brown skinned person, no taller than 16 inches, standing

motionless on the trail. His expression was like, “Oops, busted!” Then he smiled and waved. My friend said he was close enough to see the stitching on its clothes. They stared at each other for over a minute, then it stepped off the trail and disappeared into the bushes.

The Little People are said to possess magical powers. Some of the lore is frightening, yet other aspects are benevolent.

In August of 2012, I went to the Pryor Mountains alone and camped for two nights. This a small range partially within the boundary of the Crow Indian Reservation. The terrain is used for cattle grazing, and it’s also home to a protected herd of free-roaming wild horses.

Before the trip I asked around about these mountains, and realized it isn’t really a destination for hiking. One thing I heard from everyone was that I should make an offering while visiting there, and they all said to leave tobacco for the Little People.

I took an old bandana, cut it into little sections, filled each with pipe tobacco and tied them in tiny pouches with cotton string. I carried eight of these into the mountains and left them as offerings.

It was a beautiful six hour drive from my cabin in Idaho to the Pryors. The route took me across the heart of Yellowstone National Park, and my time in the car was a sort of meditative preparation.

I went to the Pryor Mountains with the *direct intention of having a contact experience*, and I said this out loud multiple times, in the car and in the backcountry. I wanted a flying saucer to land so an alien could step out and tell me why all these fucked up things have been happening. That didn’t happen.

It was late summer, and the terrain was dusty and dry. I needed to be near water, so I camped the first night low in a canyon bottom. It was a tangled mess of bushes and cottonwoods, and I needed to search around in the dark to find a flat spot to sleep.

Before going to bed, I made my way into the woods to find a place to hang my food to keep it safe from bears.

I walked slowly in and around the bushes and fallen trees, and was suddenly confronted by a tiny owl. It was a saw-whet owl, barely six inches tall, staring at me in the glow of my headlamp. It was calmly perched on a branch at about chest high, and close enough to touch. I stood there amazed at its cuteness!

It sat there wide-eyed, staring at me. Little moths were attracted to my headlamp, and the owl jumped up a couple of times and plucked them out of the air between us. The motion was odd; it would jump up, then snap back. It looked like it was attached to the branch by a rubber band. After about a minute, it flew off into the darkness.

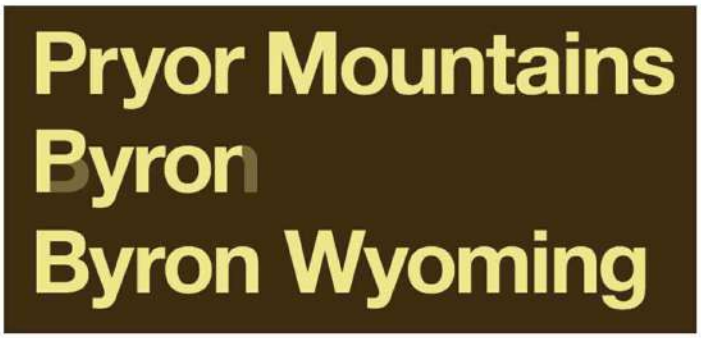
This was as close as I'd ever been to an owl in the wild, and it was magical!

northern saw-whet owl

I spent the following days walking around without much of a goal. I didn't have an objective like a big summit or an ambitious loop, I just ambled around without worrying too much about the map. There weren't any trails, but once I got above tree line the open travel was easy. I moved through sagebrush with open vistas looking out across an empty part of the west. It was terrain I loved.

As I walked, I looked for places to set the tobacco pouches as an offering to the Little People. I would tuck them in a hollow knob in a tree, or on a tiny shelf on a rock. I spoke aloud each time declaring I was a visitor, I appreciated the terrain, and was grateful.

On the afternoon of the third day, I walked back to my car and drove home. My intention for my time in the mountains was to meet an alien, but instead I had a face to face with an adorable little owl.



visual wordplay

The words Pryor and Byron are very similar. This little comparison is perhaps a better insight into how my mind works, rather than proof of anything paranormal.

Dream image with a raven

Wednesday, August 22, 2012

dream imagery

I had a remarkably vivid dream just before waking on the morning of August 18. I clearly saw a poster, and I'm pretty sure it stated, *"Follow your heart,"* but it might have said, "*Follow your heart chakra.*"

This beautiful image came to me the morning after I'd returned from three days in the Pryor Mountains of southern Montana. This is a sacred place for the Crow Nation (that's a raven in this image). I went there because I was drawn by a deep need, and a storm of synchronicities.

I was there to get a message of some sort, and except for a cute owl sighting nothing much happened. The only thing I got was this nicely art directed dream image. The poster had a dark yellow background, with upper and lower case Helvetica in white letters over a raven. I'm extremely clear on this, because during the dream I was able to zoom in and carefully study the layout. I was delighted because it so beautifully captured the clean graphic

style of the 1970s, an era dear to my heart.

There is a lot of information online about the totem or spirit meaning of ravens, and there are key points that get repeated. Here's a short list of the raven's lore:

- Rebirth without fear
- Ability to tear down what needs to be rebuilt
- Ability to find light in darkness
- Courage of self-reflection

This essay was posted on my 50th birthday.

Text added Dec. 2018:

This simple image of a raven has *everything* to do with the map, and the giant triangle across the middle of the country. It was from this map and all the experiences connected to it, that I ended up in the Pryor Mountains, the home of little owls and Little People.

I see this golden poster as the culmination of the map, and all its frenetic clues. I'd been confronted with something grand, and I was seeking an equally grand answer. I am struck by the beauty and simplicity of the dream image, and the message—*Follow your heart*.

Words to live by.

7

LAMPSHADES AND MYSTICS

In every moment, the Universe is whispering to you. You're constantly surrounded by signs, coincidences, and synchronicities, all aimed at propelling you in the direction of your destiny.

—Denise Linn

In September of 2012, I was in my living room in Idaho talking about UFO contact with author, healer and energy worker, Charis Melina Brown. We were having a rapid fire conversation about alien abduction, when there was a sudden loud tap from the lampshade behind Charis.

We both fell silent, turned and looked at the lamp.

I dismissed it saying, "Oh that was just a moth bumping into the lampshade."

We started talking again, and after few seconds both of us realized the noise was much too loud for that explanation.

She then said she was seeing sparkles and flashes in the room. I wasn't seeing anything, but I did sense some sort of heightened energy.

This brought me back to an experience of my own, when I'd been presented with a floating lampshade as part of a vivid dream. In the New Testament, Jesus talks about a basket over a lamp, which is clearly described as a lampshade.

> And He was saying to them, "A lamp is not brought to be put under a basket, is it, or under a bed? Is it not brought to be put on the lampstand? For nothing is hidden, except to be revealed; nor has anything been secret, but that it would come to light. If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.**"** (Mark 4:21-23)

Now, I'm not one to quote the Bible, but it seems curiously relevant to the

conversation Charis and I were having when we heard the loud “tap” from the lampshade. We were talking about fully coming forward with our contact experiences, and that’s very much what I see in that Bible passage.

A floating lampshade and blue orb

Friday, March 5, 2010

vivid image seen in a dream

I had a weirdly vivid dream on the night of February 16. I had to get up early the next morning for the long drive to the annual International UFO Congress (IUFOC), a week long conference in Laughlin, Nevada.

My sleep was restless, which is normal for me on the eve of a long drive. I was awake and had my laptop near my bed, so I listened to a podcast to occupy my time. Shortly after starting the audio, I fell asleep.

The dream began in a nighttime environment. I was standing in a gravel parking lot or gravel road, and was looking into a very distinctive forest. The pine trees were thin, straight and evenly spaced, without any branches down low. The forest floor was flat without any undergrowth.

I looked to my left and saw weird orange light shining through the trees. I moved to get a better view, and saw a lampshade—it was tilted at an odd angle, and seemed to be floating about a foot off the ground. It was giving off a vibrant orange glow, and I knew instantly this wasn't a lampshade. It was some sort of hallucination—something else was there.

I thought, "Oh shit, that's it—*that's the thing!*"

Even in my dream state, I clearly thought about an event in a book titled: *Into The Fringe*, by Dr. Karla Turner. There was a creepy scene where a witness described seeing a "satellite dish" in his yard, but something wasn't right. He knew it wasn't a satellite dish, it was something else. Later under hypnosis, he described a small craft and gray aliens in his yard.

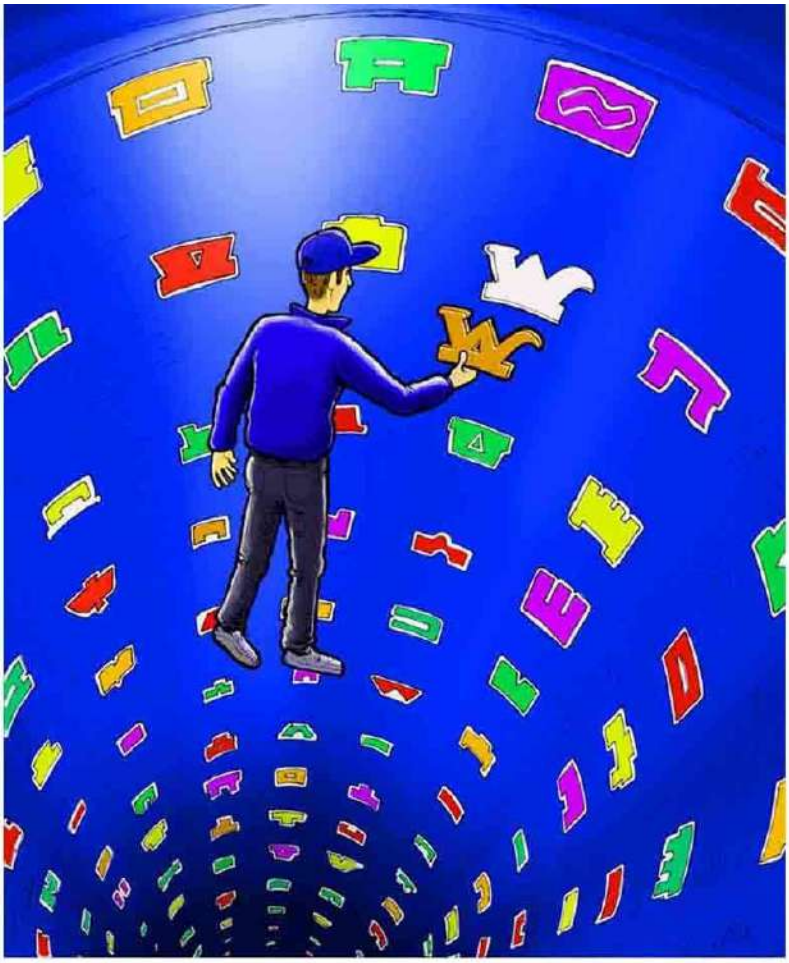
Back to my dream. I looked at the glowing lampshade for just a few seconds, and then I'm floating up off the forest floor. I rise up slow and smooth, then think to myself: *"Oh—this again."*

floating above a giant black circle

The sensation of rising upwards was quite familiar, and actually very pleasant. As I was floating upward I thought, "I have a choice to black out or to see this through, and god dammit—I'm going to see this through!"

What started slow was suddenly very fast—I zipped up above the tall trees, then stopped. My floating body was positioned with a slight tilt forward, so I was forced to look downward into the pine forest. Below me was a huge round circle, inky black against the pale orange glow in among the trees. I hovered above what looked like a large saucer shaped craft. I then descended smoothly into the center of the circle.

I don’t remember entering the craft, but was suddenly floating inside a shiny glowing blue tube, descending slowly, and straight down. The inside of the tube was covered with what seemed to be brightly colored puzzle pieces inlaid into the curved wall. Each of these shapes looked like stylized Egyptian hieroglyphs, and seemed to be made of candy colored plastic, backlit in a sort of frame. It reminded me of a glowing translucent child’s toy.



floating down a blue tube
covered in glowing symbols

I'm compelled to pick out one distinct shape

I was completely focused on one of these puzzle pieces. I felt drawn to it, so I reached out and pulled it off the wall of the tube. I held it in my hand and examined it closely. It was shaped like a stylized “W,” and I was filled with an intense compulsion to remember it.

I continued down the tube, then found myself walking around in a series of blue rooms crowded with people. This part of the dream was a lot more frenetic in its imagery, and I don’t remember much.

The dream culminated with a daylight street scene. There was some sort of meeting in a city park, and I was in among a crowd of people.

There was a small team standing together, and a blond woman was giving a speech. She seemed to be the leader of the group, and carefully explained that everything was alright, and that there will soon be a wonderful event where the UFO occupants will join us here on earth. Her proclamation sounded logical and nice, but it seemed a little too perfect. It had the vibe of a cult leader speaking to a group of naive followers.

I was thinking, “They’re lying, it’s a deception!”

My intuition was telling me something was wrong, so I approached the woman and whispered that I didn’t believe her.

Suddenly her eyes got big and black, and the same thing happened with everyone on her team—all their eyes turned black at the same time.

It was like a cheap special effect in a corny science fiction movie. They

stared at me in a very threatening way, then the woman stepped forward and warned me not to tell anyone about my feelings.

Then I woke up.

The podcast was still playing on my laptop, and I was surprised that so little time had passed given the length and complexity of my dream. It's hard to know, but I was probably asleep for less than half an hour.

The dream was so intensely vivid that I did something I'd never done before. I immediately got up, went downstairs and found my little digital voice recorder, and carried it back up to my bed. I laid under the covers and recorded the details of the dream as best as I could.

The first words I spoke were: "I just had the most vivid dream, and I'm convinced it was a dream of a UFO abduction."

> There's an audio file on my site where you can listen to the recording I made the night of the dream. It's 14 minutes long, and linked here.

I spoke slowly, and carefully described the weird narrative. When I was done I stopped the recorder, set it next to my bed, and turned off the light.

When I put my head on the pillow, I saw a small blue orb floating in the darkness. It was about the size of a grapefruit, and centered near the ceiling above my bed. I saw it for about five seconds, and then it was gone.

It faded away smooth and quick. After it disappeared, I rolled over and promptly went to sleep, an unusual reaction to seeing something so strange.

The orb was a soft focus sphere, not like the flat looking images that show up on digital flash photos. It was three dimensional and glowing softly, but it didn't light up the ceiling. It was weird—it was illuminated, but wasn't giving off any light.

My bed is just a mattress on the floor in a loft, and the ceiling is low, just a little beyond arms length while lying on my back. So the orb was close, probably less than three feet away.

Could the orb have been some sort of aftereffect in my retina from the bedside light? Maybe, but I've slept in that loft for over 16 years and never seen anything like it. I've since tried to recreate the experience by looking into lights, including the tiny red light on the voice recorder. I'd stare into a light for a minute, then shut it off and look into the darkness, but none of these attempts come close to the clarity of what I saw that night.

The images from my dream would have been impossible to explain using only words, so I created illustrations for this post as a way to describe the visuals. These drawings emerged in a weird compulsion. I *needed* to do them, and worked hard to capture the mood. The colors were outlandishly bold in a way that's unusual for my dreams.

The sensation of floating up off the forest floor wasn't scary, it was almost a relief. I thought, "Oh, this isn't bad. This floating is fine!" This comforting feeling fits the pattern of my *reassuring dreams*.

~ ~ ~

My friend Natascha and I were planning to attend the eight day Laughlin conference together. She flew in from Germany, and I picked her up at the Las Vegas airport on the afternoon of Thursday, February 18. I met her as she came out of customs, and I told her about my weirdly colorful dream while waiting for her luggage. We were planning to visit Sedona, Arizona for two nights before heading to the conference. We were going there because Natascha had a psychic reading from Anya Briggs, and she was told (quite directly) that she *must* visit Sedona.

Las Vegas to Sedona is about five hours, and we drove the last half at night. A few miles south of Flagstaff we got off I-17, and onto Highway 89 for the last 45 minutes of the trip. It was a relief to leave the busy interstate and travel on a quiet mountain road.

I'd been drinking coffee throughout the drive, and there came a point when I needed to relieve myself. We hadn't seen many cars along this stretch of highway, so I pulled over along a pretty stand of trees.

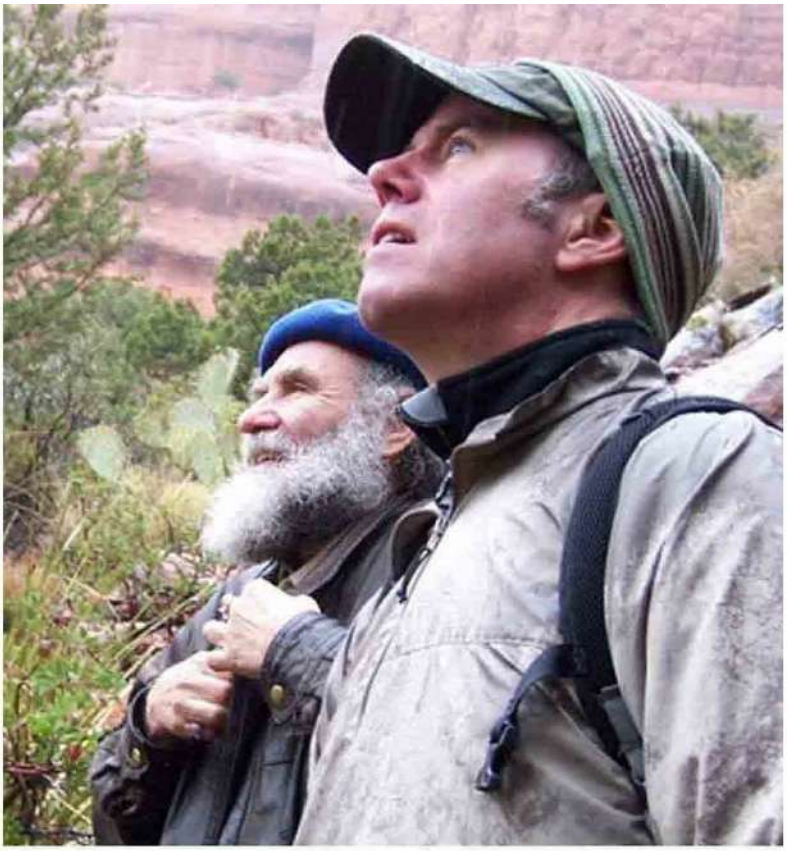
I got out, walked a few steps into the forest and did my business. While standing there, I was immediately aware that this scene exactly matched the forest in my dream from two nights before. It was a spooky feeling, and I looked to my left expecting to see a floating orange lampshade in the trees, but nothing was there .

When I got back into the car, I told Natascha that this spot was eerily similar to the forest in my dream. I'd just walked from the gravel along the edge of the road and stood among thin, evenly spaced pine trees without any branches down low, and the forest floor was flat without any undergrowth—identical to my dream.

We arrived in Sedona a little while later. Neither of us had kept track of the time, but everything seemed perfectly normal.

Meeting Joseph-Mark

Friday, March 5, 2010



Joseph-Mark Cohen and myself
on a rainy day in Sedona. Photo by Natascha.

On Friday morning, February 19, Natascha and I found a nice coffee shop in a strip mall in Sedona. Natascha struck up a conversation with a rather eccentric looking gentleman. He had a big gray beard, and was dressed like a cross between a hobo and a philosophy professor. His name was Joseph-Mark Cohen, but everyone knew him as Joseph Mark. He was looking for a ride to the Laughlin UFO conference, and we told him he could join us because we were planning on leaving later that day.

Joseph was a Sedona tourist guide who takes people to the energy centers and vortex sites, and we spent the rest of the day with him. After finishing our coffee, we did a short hike together in a canyon just out of town. It was

raining lightly, so we spent the afternoon touring the main street. Our day together could be its own blog posting, but for now all I can say is that the silly caricature of Sedona is well deserved—and I say that in the nicest way!

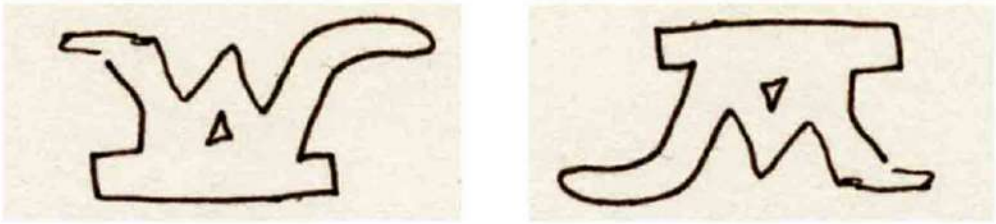
Joseph is quite the mystical fellow. He was well versed in mythology, Hebrew mysticism, the Kabbalah, astrology and number codes. He'd just produced a deck of oracle cards, each one marked with a high quality crop circle image, and was looking to show it around at the conference.

We ate dinner together at an amazing vegetarian restaurant., and while at the table Joseph did some oracle readings using his deck. It was delightful.

Joseph seemed the perfect person to ask about the symbol I had seen a few nights earlier in the dream. I pulled out a pen and drew the curious "W" shaped puzzle piece on a napkin. I asked Joseph if he knew anything about this shape. He looked for barely a second, turned the napkin upside down, smiled and said, *"Well, it's my initials!"*

True enough, when the image was upside down, it made a very tidy JM.

the symbol drawn the morning after my dream



upright *upside down*

Text added Jan. 2019:

On February 26, 2018 I read a sad posting on Facebook written by Joseph's daughter, Janna: "Yesterday, my Dad, Joseph-Mark Cohen passed away. He was a poet, a teacher, an artist, a father, a grandfather, and a spiritual leader to his community… He will be remembered by people all over the world."

I'm honored that Natascha and I had the chance to spend those delightful days with him.

The highway to Sedona

Friday, March 5, 2010

While at the conference in Laughlin, I had the chance to visit with “John Smith” (a pseudonym). We’d spoken previously at two different conferences, and this guy has had a rich set of experiences. I told him about my dream in the forest, and how it matched the eerie section of woods on the way to Sedona.

Then John told me a very strange story.

He was staying at a hotel in Flagstaff with his wife, and at 9:00 p.m. she suddenly announced that they needed to drive to Sedona, *right then*. John recognized how odd this was and told her he had a bad feeling about it, but she was absolutely adamant that they leave right away. So they left the hotel, got in their car and headed south out of Flagstaff. Five miles later they left I-17, and turned onto Highway 89. They drove that lonely stretch of highway, and after a few miles his wife said, “I don’t think we need to go to Sedona, let’s turn around.”

So they turned the car around and headed back to Flagstaff. When they got back to their hotel, John realized there was about 15 minutes of unaccountable time.

In the months that followed, both of them became increasingly agitated about that night. Some time later John underwent hypnosis in the hopes of finding out what might have happened, and a strange memory emerged surrounding this experience.

During the regression, he described slowing down, then pulling off to the edge of the road. He parked next to an open meadow, and watched as his wife was somehow pulled up out of her seat and through the roof of their rental car. He explained that she rose up and passed *through* her seat belt.

John sat motionless in the driver’s seat for about 15 minutes and then she returned, descending through the roof and back into her seat. They began driving again, and his wife said, “I don’t think we need to go to Sedona, let’s turn around.”

John and I talked about that stretch of highway 89. He tried to explain where the meadow was, and I tried to explain the spot in the forest where

Natascha and I had gotten out of the car. At the time it was hard to know exactly, but we felt the two spots were probably close.

When I shared this story with Natascha, she pointed out that in both situations it was the woman who insisted they go to Sedona.

John returned to the location during the day and took some photos. After the conference, he sent me several pictures showing the meadow along Arizona Highway 89.

One photo showed a mailbox with an address, so I could easily search the location on Google Maps. I measured the distance to where I had stepped into the woods, and these two sites are less than three miles apart.

The forest in the background of the photo had thin pine trees without branches down low, very similar to the trees in my dream. Curiously, I used to live within a few blocks of highway 89, but it was 800 miles further north in Jackson Hole, Wyoming.

The number 123 and the Laughlin UFO conference

Thursday, July 29, 2010

Natascha and I spent two days sightseeing in Sedona Arizona before driving west to the 2010 International UFO Congress.

We drove from Sedona to the big ugly casino in Laughlin, Nevada on the night of February 20. Our new friend Joseph Mark was in the car with us, and went north to Flagstaff, then headed west. The drive was miserable—it was snowing sideways, and interstate 40 was a parade of huge trucks. What should have been a three and a half hour drive, took much longer.

As we got closer to the Nevada border the weather eased up. Joseph asked for a bathroom break, and I said I'd stop at the next exit. Sure-enough, we got off at exit 123.

We pulled into a lonely gas station, and with the cold wind and the emptiness of the desert at night, it felt spooky. There was a car parked next to us, and Natascha pointed to it. There were four cats in the car, and for some reason this struck me as funny. The window was down just enough that I could put my hand in and pet them. We never saw the driver of the car, but there was a guy with a U-Haul truck who said that it was his wife's car, and he didn't seem at all bothered that I would stick my hand in the window.

We got off at exit 123 followed by petting four cats, so in a way it was a 1234 sync. Nothing beyond that, I just thought it was funny. I'll add that Natascha doesn't think this story is nearly as funny as I do.

~ ~ ~

There's was second 123 event a few days later at the conference—and this one is a bit more overt.

Natascha and I shared a room in the big hotel connected to the tacky Aquarius Casino on the dreary strip in Laughlin. The conference proceedings took place in a big hall on the opposite side of the gaming floor.

We were both jolted awake in the middle of the night by a very loud pounding on the hotel room door. There were two violent blows. The way I remember it, the sound felt like a big strong guy hitting the door twice with

his fist as hard as he could. I was suddenly awake and my heart was pounding.

My instantaneous thought was: IT'S THEM!

I rolled over and looked at the clock, and it was 1:23 a.m. Let me add that before rolling over, I knew what time it would be.

It was scary. I waited for more knocks, but nothing happened. I never got up to answer the door—I knew no one would be there. This hotel wasn't a place with rowdy kids, in fact, we were in a section that didn't allow children at all. And the clientele in Laughlin is mostly senior citizens, so it seems unlikely that anyone would be playing a prank. There's no good explanation about why anyone would pound on our door like that.

The next morning I was in line at Starbucks in the lobby, and right in front of me was Paola Harris. She saw me and said, "This is so weird, but Natascha was in my hotel room last night."

I didn't know what she meant, and I asked her to tell me more.

She explained that she was woken out of a sound sleep (she didn't say what time) and heard someone with a German accent say: "Paola!" Right away, she knew it was Natascha, whom she had met previously in Barcelona. We both knew full well that Natascha wasn't in her room, but it was an odd way to start the day.

I also heard that a few other people at the conference had subtle (but odd) experiences that same night.

8

THE NIGHT IN THE TENT

The oldest and strongest emotion of mankind is fear, and the oldest and strongest kind of fear is fear of the unknown.

—H. P. Lovecraft

Irrational fear inside our tent

Thursday, May 20, 2010

inside the tent, drawn from memory

I've just returned home after spending two beautiful weeks in the Four Corners area. My close friend Natascha flew in from Germany specifically to explore and camp in this amazing part of the desert southwest.

A few curious things happened during our trip, and this posting is one of the more dramatic experiences. Natascha is here with me, and has been adding details as I write. We are trying to make this post as accurate as we can.

On Thursday May 13 it felt like our long road trip was winding down, so

we began our journey home to Idaho. While driving north after leaving Mesa Verde, I noticed the brakes on my car were responding poorly.

We went into a small auto shop in Cortez, Colorado, and after putting my Subaru on the lift the mechanic told us, "I can't let you leave town, *or you'll die*." That took me by surprise, and I asked him to explain. He said he could be held liable if he let us leave the shop with broken brakes. They needed to order parts, but they wouldn't arrive for five days. We rented a cheap car, and figured we'd make the best of it.

Later that afternoon after renting the car, Natascha and I went to a coffee shop, and asked our very nice server (wearing a very groovy hippy dress) if she knew of any spots to camp near Cortez. She said there was open camping on public land outside of Dolores, the next town to the east.

She gave us directions, and after a short drive we were in a lovely area of tall trees and sagebrush. We found a secluded spot off the lonely forest service road, complete with an old fire ring and broken beer bottles—perfect for our one-night camping needs.

We set up our tent, then headed back into the town of Dolores where we ate pizza at a cute local brewery. Our table was right next to the window, and looked out on a quiet corner of this very small town. During dinner, Natascha was quite emotional and cried a little bit. She's here with me now, explaining to me that she was in some sort of crisis. She was feeling sad, but doesn't know the source of these emotions.

After eating our pizza, we went back to the campsite and climbed into our small tent. It seems like we both fell asleep quickly—and this is where things get strange.

I was suddenly jolted awake. Natascha had let out a short shriek, and I sat bolt upright and screamed with an intensity that might be impossible to describe. I was screaming in fear, sure enough, but it was also a primal outburst of defense.

I've slept in the mountains for decades and dealt with some scary stuff in the dark, but this was different. If a grizzly bear had ripped through the tent and put its jaws around my throat, I would not have been as scared as I was in that moment. I have *never in my life* been frightened in a way that would come close to those moments in that tent. I've since described this as *synthetic fear,* and this feels like the only way to articulate the absolute irrational intensity. It felt as if my very soul was at the precipice of being

extinguished.

I switched on my headlamp, held it in my hand, and asked Natascha what happened. I actually had the wherewithal to say, “Tell me the first thing that comes to your mind. Don’t think, just tell me what happened.”

She said almost nothing, simply whispering, “I saw a face.”

Natascha later explained that she felt blocked, like it was impossible to tell me what she’d actually seen. She struggled to articulate what happened, and feels that perhaps she was still lingering in some other realm where time had a different meaning. She was partially somewhere else while I was firmly in *this* time reality, and it created some kind of disconnect between us.

Moments after our screaming session, I stammered to Natascha in a voice on the verge of panic: “Look—if we need to—we can just leave—right now—we can leave the tent set up and just drive to town and get a hotel room—we can do that if we need to…"

I was freaked out, and it came out in my voice. This is something I would never say in any normal circumstance.

She asked me, “Do you believe in evil ghosts?”

I thought carefully and replied, “No.” My response was less out of honesty, and more an attempt to keep the mood from getting any scarier.

At some point I looked at my watch, and saw it was only 11:40 p.m. My reaction was: Oh shit, it’s still so early and we’ll have to worry about scary stuff for the rest of the night!

I had one arm over Natascha as we lay there in silence. We must have spoken a little, but I can’t remember anything. I know my heart was pounding, and I felt trapped in a spiral of impending doom.

I laid there thinking, “This is fucking terrifying. This is insane. How could I EVER camp out here? How could I ask for this kind of fucking shit!” My mind was spinning out of control.

I ended up chanting a repetitive mantra in my head, *“Love and Light, Love and Light, Love and Light...”* Over and over and over. This might seem corny, but I really meant it!

At one point I put my arm back in my own sleeping bag, and promptly fell asleep. I have to say this seems awfully weird, that I could slip back into sleep after being SO freaking terrified. It seems impossible that we could both simply doze off again.

Then I had what might have been a dream. I’m not sure when, but it feels

like it happened moments after falling asleep. It was weirdly vivid without any dreamlike distortion, and very accurate to the interior of the tent. I'll add that this dream was NOT scary in the least, it was void of any emotion—good or bad.

From where I was laying, I looked up and saw a glowing round mandala floating in the tent. It was up and to my left above Natascha's feet. It was a simple circle, about the size of a large pizza pan with a lone dot in the center. This wasn't an orb, it seemed flat. My instant impression was that it looked like the blurry cataract image in my right eye. This was strange, because it didn't look anything like that (more on this below).

From where I was laying, I looked up and saw a glowing round mandala floating in the tent to my left and above Natascha's feet. It was a simple circle, about the size of a large pizza pan with a lone dot in the center. This wasn't an orb, it seemed flat. My instant impression was that it looked like the blurry cataract image in my right eye. This was strange, because it didn't look anything like that (more on this below).

Then I was floating up off the floor of the tent, and the elevator-up sensation of slowly rising felt strangely familiar. I thought to myself, *"I need to remember this—I need to remember this—I need to remember this..."*

I should have bumped into the roof of the tent, but that didn't happen. Instead, it felt like I smoothly dissolved from one scene into another. The environment of the tent changed to a backdrop of white light, and I thought, *"Am I on a table? Am I on a table? Am I on a table?*"

I didn't understand where I was. It was a mysterious realm, surrounded by a uniform white glow. Was I on my back? Was I upright?

Then I heard Natascha say, "Mike, you are floating!"

Hearing her, I was sucked back down into the tent, and the dream abruptly ended. I feel pretty strongly that she never actually said this, but I clearly remember hearing her German accent in that dream state. Her words pulled me back down into the sleeping bag, and I was deeply asleep. This is exactly my memory, but I don't think it really happened the way I've described it.

I slept soundly the rest of the night, and that's unusual. It's normal for me to wake and drift in and out, but that didn't happen.

The next morning we immediately began to talk about the events of the night, and more details emerged.

While still in our sleeping bags, I asked Natascha what she saw that made

her scream. She explained that she saw a face within a circle. I asked her to describe it, and she couldn't. I pressed her for more details and she said, "I can't say, but the only thing that seems to match is that drawing you did, of the face in the circle from your blog."

She described my own impressions of the round mandala I had seen hovering in the tent, and this was very curious because I hadn't yet told her anything about my dream. As I said earlier, all I'd seen was a floating circle, but it reminded me of the image within my right eye.

I asked where she'd seen the face because the night before I'd assumed it was directly above her, but she pointed instead to the wall of the tent just up and to the left of her feet—exactly where I'd seen the glowing mandala. This scared me, because she had no idea what I had seen.

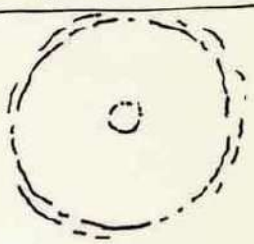
This imagery was described in an earlier post from October of 2009, titled: *The face in my eye*.

CORTEZ / Colorado / May 2010

Dream: (AFTER the 11:40 PM EVENT)

- I was in the tent, exactly as I was actually sleeping, next to Natscha.

- I began to float up of the sleeping pad.
- I thought: "I have to remember this, I have to remember this..."
- The environment was white, glowing
- was I floating on my back? Was I on a table?
- Natscha exclaimed "Hey - you are FLOATING!" in the dream.



the image, in the tent, was above me, off to my left. It looked EXACTLY like the blurry circle I see in my cataract in my eye. Flat, not truly 3D.

Notes from my small sketchbook, written the morning after the experience in the tent

The world seemed perfectly normal when I got out of the tent; the sun was shining, and birds were singing. I walked around the campsite fully expecting to find a burn mark in the grass where a flying saucer had landed, but found nothing unusual.

What actually might have happened is difficult to say, but it was something far beyond a jolt of surprise when Natascha woke me with her short scream. I cannot dismiss the power of the fear that overcame us—this feeling of terror was entirely different than any emotion I've ever experienced, the emotions were amplified in a way that seems extraordinary. I've wondered if this irrational fear was somehow projected into us from some outside source.

What's even more bizarre was the extremely vivid nature of my dream, and the matching details described by Natascha. Everything about this event has left me unnerved.

~ ~ ~

There were a few comments worth noting below this post, the first was from Natascha:

> What would interest me most is: Is there anybody out there who had any kind of experience where she or he felt this irrational fear? This is not the first time where it happened to me… but the first time where I had it in a way with direct confirmation.
>
> And I tell ya' I'm more than surprised that Mike was freaking out like this. This is not how I know him. VERY curious stuff!!!
>
> …So although Mike mentions his dream—for me there was no dream. It was real, like the fingers on my keyboard right now. I wonder if our mind plays tricks with us and makes us believe that we were dreaming because THEN some things might be easier to take.

There was also an interesting comment from fellow blogger and experiencer Lucretia-Heart. She shared something that happened on the night of May 13, the same night as our scary experience in the tent. Lucretia wrote:

> *That's* the night I totally felt, out of the blue, like I needed to talk to you... It's not like me, and yet I couldn't stop thinking about you and I needed to be talking that night. It would have been midnight? One in the morning for you I think... My bizarre need to contact you that particular night is an odd synchronicity for sure. I am not prone to up and calling people late at night... *Yet I felt compelled*. Huh!

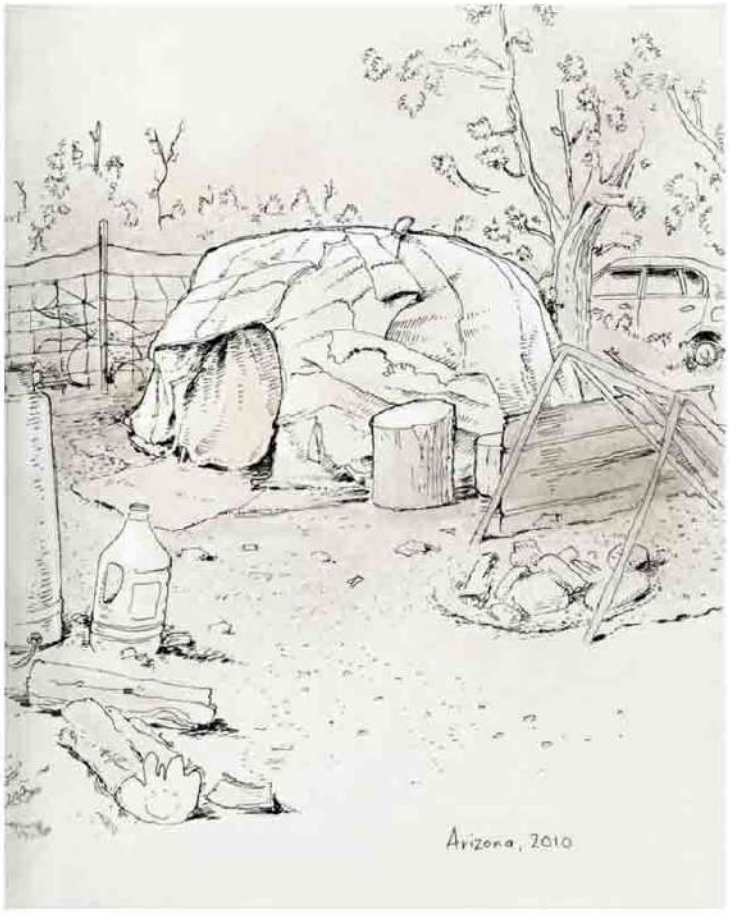
Over the years, Lucretia and I have talked on the phone a lot, but never at night. She described the urgent need to call me so late as something decidedly unusual. Her anxiety lines up to the moment of something that sure seems like UFO contact. She feels there must be some sort of telepathic link between us that created such a powerful compulsion. I agree.

The same thing happened less than three years later. On March 10th, 2013, Lucretia woke up in the middle of the night with a similar need to call me, this was on the night of another powerful experience in the desert southwest.

Both of these events showed up in a psychic vision as two ends of a straight line, with a third equally bizarre experience in the middle. All three points lined up on a map, and this transformative story will be told in a later post titled: *My confirmation event.*

Sweat lodge and a curious scratch

Saturday, July 3, 2010



sweat lodge from my sketchbook

After our intense night in the tent, Natascha and I drove our rental car back to the groovy coffee shop in Cortez. I used my little flip phone to call Miriam Delicado, a contactee who has spent a lot of time in this part of the southwest. I explained we were stuck down here and asked what we should do, and she told us we needed to go to Canyon De Chelly in Arizona and do a sweat lodge ceremony with a Navajo man at one of the campgrounds. We topped off our coffee and started driving.

Canyon De Chelly is one of the most magical places on earth. It's entirely on Navajo land, so entering the canyon bottom requires a local guide. We

spent the afternoon with wet feet in the cold muddy Chinle Creek with a wonderful guide named Francine.

Afterwards we went to the campground and found Howard, the man who would lead the ceremony. We were all set up to have the sweat the next morning, along with a few other people at the campground.

I wasn't sure what I was getting myself into, it felt like I was proceeding without intention. It was more like I was being pulled toward the sweat lodge, rather than seeking it.

At some point that day I took my shirt off and I found a curious scratch that ran from my left shoulder down toward my belly button. I had been in the tent in Dolores, Colorado that morning, so this would have been the first time I'd taken my shirt off since the scary events of the previous night.

At first glance it didn't seem that unusual. It was a thin little scratch, as if a single cat claw or rose thorn had run across my skin. But when you looked at it very closely it wasn't a scratch at all, it seemed like some sort of rash. It was a bumpy length of tiny blisters in a long straight line. These were little bubbles of yellowish fluid right at the surface of my skin, and each little blister was less than a millimeter wide.

I'm color blind, and even I could see the thin red line. It looked like an allergic reaction, as if someone had taken a fine point pen full of poison ivy ink and drawn a straight line about 18 inches long down my chest. It was weird and I've never seen anything like it.

It didn't itch or hurt, but it was certainly curious. It healed up quickly and cleanly over the next few days.

Did I get this scratch the previous night in the tent in Dolores? Was it connected with that feeling of terror? At the time both Natascha and I asked the same thing, and were quick to dismiss those thoughts. It might have come from some desert cactus, but I hadn't done anything in the previous few days with my shirt off. I have no memory of getting scratched by any plants or coming in contact with poison oak, a common tree in the area that can produce a rash.

About a week later I took a shower, and it all washed away. After it was gone, Natascha and I each had the same reaction—*why didn't we take a picture?* We both investigate UFO events, but it never crossed our minds to get a photo until after it was gone. I don't know how or when I got that scratch, but I'm at the point where I feel it must have happened that creepy

night in the tent.

When I crawled into the sweat lodge I wore a bathing suit, and my bare chest displayed that long red scratch. There were eight of us in the dark cramped shelter, with a pit in the center for the very hot rocks.

Howard lead a really impressive ceremony. It was mystical, and at the same time playful. I felt rooted in my own world, and simultaneously connected with something beautiful and ancient. The overriding theme was to surrender to the heat.

There were four separate sessions within the dark little lodge; one for each of the four cardinal directions, and each getting progressively hotter. The final session was extremely hot, and everyone inside was forced to lie down to breathe the cooler air near the dirt floor. I tried to fully surrender, not only to the heat, but to the entire ceremony.

When it was over, everyone was quiet and fatigued. I spent the rest of that very pleasant day drinking water and napping. Natascha took a long walk out to the rim of the canyon with Howard's dog.

That was a long set of stories to describe a terrifying experience in a tent. It began with someone telling me, *you can't leave town or you'll die*, and ended with a shamanic ceremony of death and rebirth.

The next morning, Natascha and I said goodbye to Howard. We slept that night in *The Valley of the Gods*, a desolate and beautiful area in southeast Utah. And that's another interesting story.

> **July 5, 2010**
> **Natascha left a comment below this post:**
> Hah—I have to admit that I totally forgot about the scar! And I remember that I had the thought: we should take a picture but then within seconds forgot about it, too. I'm grateful that we could make this sweat lodge. I did a few before in Germany but it's a whole different story when you make it with a Navajo on his own land… And of course the little story in Valley of the Gods needs to be told by me because Mike has no memory of it.

Text added Feb. 2019:

Natascha is right, there is a story that needs to be told. I didn't write about it at the time and that surprises me, but there was so much happening that it slipped through the cracks.

After leaving the campground at Canyon De Chelly, Natascha and I drove though some of most remarkably desolate areas in the lower 48. We drove a lonely dirt road that passed through the Valley of the Gods, a big expanse of

emptiness in the southeast corner of Utah. We parked the car in a dusty turn-off, then hiked a few miles up a beautiful canyon. We found a big flat area of red sandstone just as the sun was setting, it was the perfect spot to sleep.

We didn't have a tent, and were lying side by side in our sleeping bags looking straight up. Our view was partially blocked by the narrow canyon walls, so all we had was a long stripe of the twilight sky. It was that magic moment when the heavens were fading from pink to purple, and before the appearance of the first stars. I thought this was the perfect moment to make a plea to the universe and ask for any helpful insights. Natasha agreed.

I said, "We are honored to be in such a beautiful spot and we thank the universe." Then Natasha repeated the same phrase in German, and we alternated back and forth. I continued, "We are open and receptive to whatever you want to offer us, and we will use anything we learn here to make the world a better place. We offer our gratitude. Thank you."

At the very second we finished our plea—a bright orange dot crossed the sky directly above us. It was only in sight for about 20 seconds, and we were both astonished. I blurted out, "If you're a UFO, wiggle around or something!" Nothing happened, it continued in a straight line, then disappeared over the canyon wall to the south.

After it was gone, we excitedly tried to figure out what we'd seen. It was a bright circle of orange light, and seemed bigger and moving too fast to be a satellite. Nothing about it matched the blinking running lights of a conventional aircraft. I know the International Space Station can seem unusually bright at twilight, but honestly, what we saw was too big, too orange and too fast—it felt like we saw a UFO.

We talked for a long time trying to explain it away, but kept on returning to the fact that it appeared at the end of our spoken plea—at the *exact* moment we said thank you. I mean, even if it was the International Space Station, the timing was weird!

The sky got dark, and the stars were spectacular. I slept fine, but the next morning Natasha told me that she woke up in the middle of the night and sensed some sort of presence. She pointed to a tangle of thorny bushes and said, "It felt like somebody was standing just out of view from where we were laying. It was near our heads and seemed tall. I was too afraid to lift my head to have a look, so I whispered to you, 'Mike, what is that above us?' You said something but I can't remember anything, I must have fallen asleep

again.”

She told me this as I was eating cold cereal in a cup. I had no memory of her waking me and when she asked what I’d said, without skipping a beat I replied, “That’s a star standing still.”

She said, “That’s right, that’s what you said!”

I didn’t remember saying that during the night, and I didn’t understand why I’d said it right then. Eventually we hiked out of the canyon and back to the car. An hour later, were drinking hot coffee in Bluff, Utah.

9

DREAMS

Through dreams a door is opened to mythology, since myths are of the nature of dreams, and that, as dreams arise from an inward world unknown to waking consciousness, so do myths: so, indeed, does life.

—Joseph Campbell

An owl dream with Robert Moss

Tuesday, June 28, 2016

I get a lot of emails about owl experiences. A woman recently sent me a message where she described a dream—and it's wonderful.

It was winter in the dream, and a big owl flew towards her then plopped face first into the snow. The next thing that happens is Robert Moss runs into the scene, points to the owl and shouts, "It's an owl! It's an owl! It's an owl!"

The woman then explained that Robert Moss is an author who writes about dreams, and their role in living a deeper life. So a guy who analyzes dream imagery shows up in a dream! (I love this stuff!) I should add that she describes the owl in the snow as being four feet tall.

She said, "I understood that Robert Moss was there to tell me to pay attention to this dream symbol, and I became somewhat lucid."

I'd never heard of him, so I did some online research and found a few videos that gave a good overview of his ideas on dreaming. I was impressed and ordered one of his books, *Dreaming the Soul Back Home* (2012), which is excellent.

> When strangers ask me what I do, I often respond, "I am a storyteller and I help people to find and live their bigger and braver stories…"
> —Robert Moss

Text added almost a year later, May 11, 2017:

I received a comment under a post about an interview with author Gordon White on his podcast *Rune Soup.* On his show we talked about owls and UFOs, and it seems someone had exactly the experiences I'd been trying to make some sense of. She wrote:

> Freaky timing for this interview because I was hearing an owl hooting this past Sunday afternoon and saw a UFO while it was happening. The UFO and hooting both ceased at the same time. I tried to take pictures of the UFO but it was so sunny I couldn't see it in the camera, too much glare. I got nuthin'. Then I looked for the owl but never found it. I haven't heard or seen an owl in the daytime in 25 years. It was most definitely an owl hooting, it was a sound I was more familiar with as a child where I grew up than where I live now… It was really weird, but I do love weird, so it made my day. It just felt like a reminder that the world I'm walking around in is not the whole picture.

I needed to hear more about this experience, so I reached out to the person who posted the comment. It was from the same woman who had the funny dream where Robert Moss was yelling at her to pay attention to the owl!

Lucid dream with John Keel

Sunday, September 25, 2011

Last night I had a wonderfully pleasant dream. I was at a UFO conference, and was delighted to meet none other than John Keel, the author of *The Mothman Prophecies* and a lot of other important books that explore the outer fringes of the paranormal.

I was eager to speak with him one on one. We left the big convention hall and walked outside together, he was smiling and engaging. We walked in a bleak desert environment with empty parking lots and an old gas station.

Now, I knew perfectly well this was a dream, and that Mr. Keel had died two years ago, but I was very aware I might be interacting with his spirit in this vivid dream. It seemed entirely possible that my dream realm might be overlapping with the spirit realm.

I figured he was interacting with me from the afterlife, so I asked how he was doing, and he smiled and said: “Oh fine, just fine.”

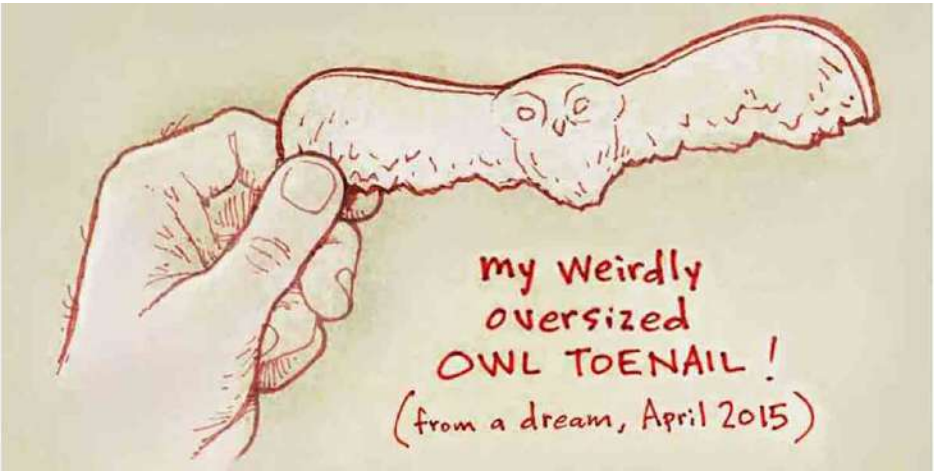
And then I nervously asked, “Well, from where you are, and what you know, how am I doing, I mean with this ongoing research stuff?”

I can’t remember how he answered, but he smiled and seemed genuinely positive. I think he said something like, “Oh you’re doing fine, just fine.”

We went into the gas station, and he bought me a cup of coffee. He paid the cashier by first setting a handful of coins on the counter, and then he magically levitated a few back up into his hand in order to make exact change.

My dream of owl toenails

Friday, April 10, 2015



Last week I dreamt of owls. I was looking down at my bare feet, and realized the toenails of both big toes had gotten really long. Instead of using a proper toenail clipper, I just reached down and slowly started picking and peeling at the extra length of one of my nails.

After peeling it off, I realized something extraordinary—the piece of toenail *looked exactly like an owl in flight!* The way the flakey layers of the nail had torn away, it looked like wings with feathers. I peeled off the other toenail, and it looked like an owl too. When I held up these pieces of toe nail for closer examination, they had both somehow grown to be about six inches across!

Warning: This is what happens to your subconscious when you immerse yourself in owl research.

A terrifying dream that changed to full consciousness

Monday, November 21, 2011

It took a few months to write this out and finally post it. I experienced some sort of extremely vivid dream on August 15 while sleeping at a friend's house, and the intensity was terrifying.

The beginning of the dream felt entirely real. My dreams are almost always in some surreal location where everything seems mixed up, but this one seemed to exactly match the setting of the apartment where I was sleeping. This doesn't happen very often, and when it does there seems to be something strange at play.

I remember at one point in the dream I left the bed, went down the stairs and out to the driveway to look up at the nighttime sky. There was a sense of waiting, or expectation.

When I came back inside I remember doing mundane things, like turning the lights on as I moved through the apartment. I also remember walking through a hallway that matched the house where I grew up, and this brief moment felt decidedly dreamlike.

At that point in the dream, I returned to bed.

I awoke with a jolt and saw five skinny beings standing around the bed. The bed was just a mattress on the floor, so I was looking up at them, and they seemed to be about four feet tall. They appeared as misty white apparitions, like a glowing fog, and their outline was human shaped. They seemed to be standing motionless.

I strongly suspect I was still in the dream-state, because that's what it felt like. The beings around the bed were vague and it's hard to remember much, but the scene exactly matched the bedroom.

I sat up in bed, and when I put my arm out to touch one of the beings, my hand passed right through it. There was an odd sensation of fuzziness, or a sort of spider web feeling. I was intrigued by this strange sensation, and there was no fear as I reached out to them.

But something else happened, and it seems like it took place a short time

after sitting up—it was a jarring flip-flop in the otherwise calm narrative of this dream, and the change was unimaginably terrifying. I was suddenly experiencing a frenetic slideshow of freakish images. The dream-state was now amped up with a harrowing vividness. The images were like something out of a gruesome set of heavy metal album covers—each one was like a finished piece of surreal artwork. They were bloody and perverse. These highly stylized snapshots looked like an H.R. Giger nightmare; each hideous image would last less than a second, and the next would appear, then the next, and the next.

These dark visuals bombarded my dream-state, and the intensity of what was happening seemed to jar me out of sleep. I was now staring blankly at the bedroom wall, lit with the soft glow of dawn. At this point I was most definitely awake, but the nightmare slideshow continued.

These horrific images continued to flash before my eyes. They were literally in a rectangular frame, as if projected in super high resolution on a sort of floating screen directly in line with my sight.

This crazy barrage of images was something I've never experienced before. *I thought I had gone insane*.

It was terrifying. I lay there with my eyes open and my heart pounding, experiencing a kind of panic attack. I don't know how long this fully conscious part lasted, maybe less than 30 seconds, but it was enough to scare the shit out of me. The feeling of absolute madness was overwhelming.

It eventually faded away. I was left shaken and drained, and I was emotionally exhausted for the rest of the day.

Two days later I emailed Anya Briggs in New York, and tried to explain what had happened. She's is a powerful psychic, and I trust her insights. I had one burning question, and asked Anya: *Was I abducted that night?*

She was quick to respond, and reassured me that I was NOT abducted (and that's what I felt too), but there had been some sort of interaction.

Below is an edited excerpt of a recorded call between myself and Anya a few days later. She did something that seems to happen a lot when we talk—she slipped into channel mode, and began to communicate with her guides.

> **Anya:** You are piercing the veil between one reality and the next. They are inter-dimensional beings, they are from somewhere else, they're not of this world physically, and it was real. You

weren't dreaming.

They've done this to me. They'll do something to your head to make you feel like you're dreaming. That was technology that was used on you. Fear is an acronym for False Expectations And Reality.

This was an initiation and you failed (she laughed), the frequency was so high it frightened you.

Mike: It felt like all of a sudden my mind had been overridden, and I was thrust into this rapid fire slide-show, the images were terrible, gruesome, like H.P. Lovecraft, bloody, monsters—and I had no control over it.

I had lost the ability to control my mind. The sensation of losing my mind was very real, and that really freaked me out, that sensation of insanity.

Anya: Maybe you were temporarily hijacked?

Mike: It sure felt like it!

Anya: You must understand that this is an initiation for a certain type of species to reach out to you, to understand the fear construct better.

And what they were doing, believe it or not, it may have seemed like torture or punishment, or something that was thrust upon you against your will. But you had asked for this, Dear One, they're saying.

It was an outreach program that failed. Their methodology was not working, so they're going to try a different tactic again at some point, to try and understand the fear input without freaking you out. Please understand this was not done with malicious intent. It was not meant to frighten you, but it had the opposite effect. They didn't understand this.

They wanted to see what you understood as far as the fear construct, and your reaction. The interpretation of events did not go well, and we apologize for that.

~ ~ ~

Note: My frightful dream took place August 15, 2011. Anya Briggs calls August 15 her awakening experience. On that day in 2008 she saw a giant UFO hovering over her apartment building, yet no one else on the busy street seemed to notice what was looming above them. She heard and felt a direct telepathic communication from whatever was inside that craft. She went home and began urgently writing, and this was the beginning of a new chapter of her life.

I have another friend with profound psychic experiences, Susan MacLeod, and she also says that August 15, 2005 was her awakening experience. That event is detailed in chapter two in *Stories from The Messengers*.

Also, I was going to draw an image of the glowing beings around the bed, but this post is so dark, and I don't really feel all that inspired. Maybe someday.

10

STREETLIGHTS

The sacred is in the ordinary, that it is to be found in one's daily life—this lesson can be easily lost. To be looking elsewhere for miracles is to me a sure sign of ignorance that everything is miraculous.

— Abraham Maslow

The common streetlight is about as uninteresting as it gets, yet it plays a role in the overall mystery. What gets described in the next few posts is eerily common among experiencers, so I’m not alone with these stories. There seems to be something about the presence of an individual that can act as a sort of psychic tripwire. The ordinary and the unknown can trigger a moment of magic.

Streetlights

Tuesday, April 28, 2009

Last week I was in Bozeman Montana. I was on my bike riding through the cute streets of the downtown neighborhoods. It was nighttime, snowing, and really pretty. As I rode, I calmly thought to myself, “Nothing strange has happened in a little while—has this weird part of my life ended?”

And, at that exact instant, *the streetlight directly above me turned off*.

Ha! I laughed out loud. It was funnier than it was weird. I rode past a few other streetlights to see if it would happen again. It didn’t.

Over the years I’ve occasionally had streetlights turn off as I approach them, but it’s been so inconsistent that I haven’t considered it as anything strange. But that night while riding my bike in the wet snow, it felt different. It felt like I asked a question and got an *instantaneous* reply.

The question was just a nice, playful thought—nothing needy or pleading. Sometimes simple questions pop into my head and there’ll be a prompt reaction.

“Is that a crystal around your neck?”

Friday, September 4, 2009

I was on my bike at night in downtown Bozeman Montana looking for ice cream. It was late and a lot of stores were closed, so I rode to an open gas station at the edge of town. I got a pint out of the freezer and went up to the counter to pay. The woman behind the counter looked at me oddly, then cautiously asked, “Is that a crystal around your neck?”

I said yes.

Okay, I’ve been wearing a lepidolite crystal on a chain around my neck. This alone should tell you how far over the edge I’ve gone in immersing myself in this ongoing weirdness. The events surrounding how I came to get this crystal should be its own nutty blog posting.

Back to the gas station.

The woman was extremely polite, and explained that the stone was mounted incorrectly, causing the energy to leak from the bottom. It’s a tiny egg shaped stone, and hangs with the chain atop the skinny axis. She told me that it should be attached at its middle so it would hang sideways instead of up and down.

I said thank you, and took her suggestion seriously.

I got on my bike and rode down the empty main street. I had a very simple and calm feeling, and thought to myself, “What am I supposed to make of that? Should I follow up on her recommendation?”

And at that instant—*the streetlight above me went off*.

That kind of reaction to a calm feeling is a pattern, and I don’t seem to have any way to control when it happens. There’s no stress or anxiety, they simply appear in my mind as a nice calm thought. I get the strong impression I should trust these nice thoughts.

Coming to terms with these experiences has been extremely difficult. It’s been worrisome (am I insane?) and scary (WTF?). I will dwell on this quandary, and it’s unhealthy. I can get stuck in an oppressive head-space, so when these nice thoughts appear, I recognize them for what they are—at least I hope I do.

Text added Nov. 2018:

I never mounted the crystal the way the woman suggested. I gave the necklace to Natascha in 2010.

Another streetlight event

Tuesday, July 6, 2010

During our time together in the Four Corners area in May, Natascha and I had an extremely intense conversation at a restaurant. We were both left kind of confused and overwhelmed by the magnitude of what we had talked about. It was dark when we left the restaurant, and we walked back to our motel through the quiet streets of Moab.

I remember saying something like: “Oh God, this is so weird. Are we on the right path with all of this?”

Right at that exact instant—*the streetlight above us blinked off*.

Streetlight weirdness

Thursday, February 27, 2014

On the final night of the recent UFO conference, I drove a friend to the Phoenix airport. At some point we got a little mixed up, so I pulled into a fast food place to check the map. As I parked the car the streetlight above us went off, and she casually said, “That happens to me all the time.”

We checked the directions, pulled out and continued driving.

There wasn’t much traffic as we travelled down a typical suburban highway lined with streetlights. I kept both hands on the steering wheel and pointed up with my index finger at the next approaching streetlight.

At that instant, the light went out. I did this twice, and each time it went out at the exact moment I pointed. I stopped after the second time and didn’t try again. I commented to her that this kinda thing felt normal.

Also, she remembered that two streetlights turned off on the initial highway right as we were leaving the site of the conference. This seems correct. So, add two more for a total of five streetlights blinking out as we travelled underneath them.

Moody streetlight

Wednesday, October 17, 2018

A few nights ago, I was talking on the phone with Suzanne Chancellor. Our mutual friend Kelly just experienced another close up owl sighting, and Suzanne was filling me in on what had happened. Kelly was featured in the final chapter of *Stories from The Messengers*, her account involved getting some close-up pictures of a beautiful barred owl while on a hike.

I've since spoken with Kelly, and there'll soon be a blog post about her experience—with pictures!

It was a beautiful autumn night, and I walked around outside as I spoke with Suzanne. It was one of those conversations where each thread seemed tangled up with everything else. Elements of Kelly's story were reflected back at both of us. It seemed like every little detail was somehow connected to a frenetic web of synchro-weirdness.

We spoke as I walked around the dark driveway of the old inn where Andrea and I live. It's a narrow dirt lane that curves through a dense forest, and there is a streetlight at the bottom of the driveway where it joins the asphalt road. The light is usually on at night, but was flickering dimly as I made my way down the driveway. It slowly turned on, and stayed on as I passed under it and walked down the paved road. There was no traffic, and I headed toward an apple tree alongside the quiet road. I found the tree in the dark and picked an apple, but it was too sour to eat.

While walking back to the driveway, I told Suzanne how it all seemed so cinematic. The eerie way the lone streetlamp lit the road was like something out of a Steven Spielberg movie. I tried to describe the mood of the dramatic lighting as I walked.

I got to the pool of light under the streetlight and looked up. The lamp wasn't very bright, its color seemed a muted amber so I could stare right up into the bulb.

I carefully tried to position myself directly under the light above me. I moved a little to the left, then a bit the right. It only took a few seconds, but when I was positioned exactly under the light—*it went off!*

I had just walked along that road for about a hundred yards, and the entire

time I was talking about that light, praising its mood as I approached.

As silly as it sounds, it felt like the light clicked off as a playful thank you for my attention and appreciation.

11

THE SYNCHROMYSTICAL

Synchromysticism is a praxis. You are basically psychoanalyzing culture—you are approaching culture, particularly pop culture, as a Jungian analyst. Pop culture is our collective dream, it's the collective consciousness dreaming.

— Christopher Knowles

The Evolutionary Triad

Monday, December 5, 2011

proto-human

modern man

fetus / star-child / alien

KUBRICK, FOWLER and THE WATCHERS

The drama of evolution is played out in the book of Genesis, as well as in Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey*. And the drama of synchronicity is played out seemingly everywhere, and things end up getting intertwined in mysterious ways.

Kubrick's film begins with the Dawn of Man, where proto-humans encounter a mysterious alien force that spawns an evolutionary leap. The middle part of the film involves modern man as he re-encounters this same mysterious force.

The film reaches a climax with an apotheosis—a glowing fetus is the culmination of our next evolutionary change. We see three distinct stages of evolution in *2001: A Space Odyssey*—apes, humans and an alien looking fetus.

These three stages also show up in the UFO abduction literature. Below is an excerpt from Raymond Fowler's 1991 book, *The Watchers*:

> Our analysis of the UFO abduction phenomenon must start with the question of the origin of Man himself. Why? This is when the aliens informed Betty [Andreasson/Luca] that they were given the responsibility to be caretakers of the *forms* of life on earth.
>
> Earlier, we speculated about the possibility that an advanced extraterrestrial race genetically interfered with an earth primate life-form to produce *Homo sapiens*. It is possible that this same race created *The Watchers* at the same time and appointed them as caretakers. Evidence derived from reports indicate that *The Watchers* were created from

> *Homo sapiens* himself. What is the evidence?

Fowler goes on to point out that the human fetus can look eerily like a prototypical gray alien. Big head, big prominent eyes and a spindly body.

Strangely, the fetus of a chimpanzee looks very human. The chimpanzee is our closest genetic cousin, and our genetics are so similar (our DNA is about 95% the same) that one has to ask—why aren't we chimpanzees? Perhaps we are, at least we might be their fetuses.

In his book *The Watchers*, Raymond Fowler speculates on the odd likeness. He writes:

> Are modern humans some sort of genetic alteration using a chimpanzee fetus? If we go one step further, are the gray aliens a genetic alteration using the human fetus?

Chimpanzees are born with smaller heads than humans, so the mothers don't experience the same sort of pain we do during the birth process. It's our large heads (and larger brains) that separate us from the chimpanzee.

Does the Bible give us a clue to this why this might be?

In fact, it does. When God kicks Adam and Eve out of The Garden, he bestowed only two punishments—we would feel shame (and want clothes), and from this point on we would experience painful childbirth.

> To the woman he said, "I will make your pains in childbearing very severe; with painful labor you will give birth to children…" (Genesis 3:16)

Were Adam and Eve happy chimpanzees living lives of bliss in The Garden? And who was this "God" who changed us? Were we genetically altered so that now we're now burdened with bigger heads?

The gray alien seems incapable of child bearing in a way we can presently comprehend. Their huge heads and tiny hips would make this all but impossible, unless they are employing some sort of artificial womb. This is alarmingly common in UFO abduction reports; we hear repeating stories of tanks filled with fetuses and some sort of liquid, and often hear of rooms filled with lots of these tanks. What is going on? Is there really some sort of breeding program where humans are getting upgraded?

Following this line of speculation, we must scrutinize these three distinct phases of evolution: chimpanzees, modern humans and the gray alien. The

narrative of 2001 mimics the conjecture that Fowler puts forth in *The Watchers*.

When Betty Andeasson Luca asked her little gray abductors who they were, they replied, “The Watchers.” Both Betty and Raymond Fowler are devout Christians, so I feel it’s appropriate to quote the Bible again.

> I saw in the visions of my head as I lay in bed, and behold, a watcher, a holy one, came down from heaven. (Daniel 4:13)

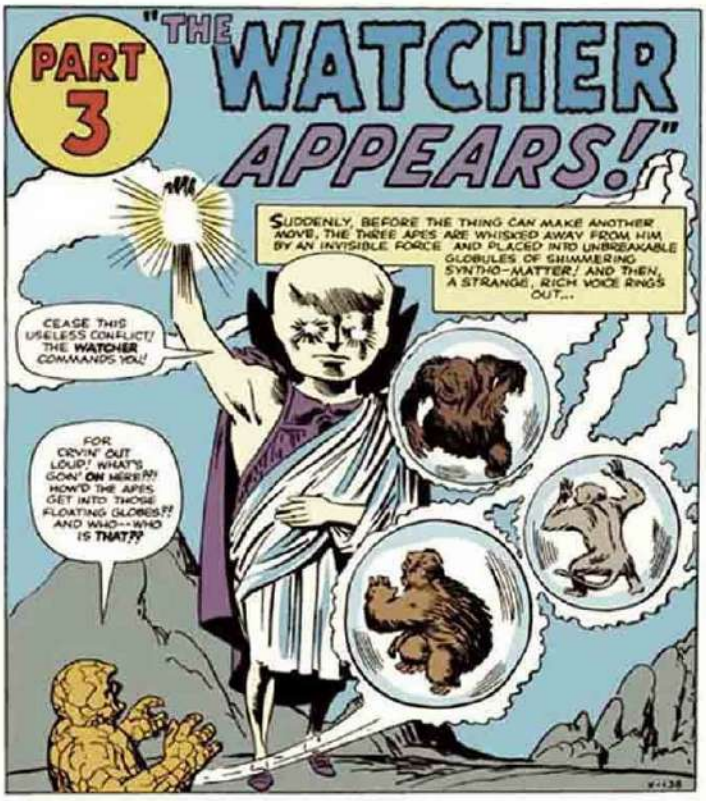
This sounds suspiciously like the opening lines from a modern day UFO abduction report.

Adding to the overall strangeness, author and researcher Raymond Fowler also came out as an alien abductee. He shared his own direct experiences in a 2002 book titled *UFO Testament: Anatomy of an Abductee*. While this might seem like a bizarre claim coming from a respected UFO researcher, it’s very common. I have come to the point where I suspect that most researchers in this field have had some sort of contact experience, either remembered or suppressed.

His most recent book is about being plagued by synchronicities, and their odd intertwining with the UFO phenomenon (a subject near and dear to my heart), this 2004 book is titled *Synchrofile*. He also has the word “owl” embedded in his name, but that’s something else altogether.

JACK KIRBY and THE WATCHER

The Watchers appear in the Bible, UFO literature and *The Book of Enoch* —and they show up in comic books too. Artist Jack Kirby and writer Stan Lee created a character called “The Watcher” to describe a race of God-like aliens. The all-powerful character is drawn with a huge bald head and vague facial features—he looks suspiciously like a fetus, or the prototypical gray alien.


PART 3
"THE WATCHER APPEARS!"
SUDDENLY, BEFORE THE THING CAN MAKE ANOTHER MOVE, THE THREE APES ARE WHISKED AWAY FROM HIM BY AN INVISIBLE FORCE AND PLACED INTO UNBREAKABLE GLOBULES OF SHIMMERING SYNTHO-MATTER! AND THEN, A STRANGE, RICH VOICE RINGS OUT...
CEASE THIS USELESS CONFLICT! THE WATCHER COMMANDS YOU!
FOR CRYIN' OUT LOUD! WHAT'S GOIN' ON HERE?! HOW'D THE APES GET INTO THOSE FLOATING GLOBES?! AND WHO--WHO IS THAT??

God-like alien with a big bald head on the moon with apes!

The mystical Watcher named Uatu first appeared on comic book stands in 1963. He reveals himself to the Fantastic Four, and makes them battle an evil Russian, the Red Ghost and his super-apes for control of the Moon. Again, this mimics some of the narrative elements in Kubrick's 2001.

Later, Jack Kirby himself took on *2001: A Space Odyssey* in a 70's comic book series. His rendering of the Star Child fetus looks suspiciously like his earlier God-like character, Uatu from *The Watchers*.

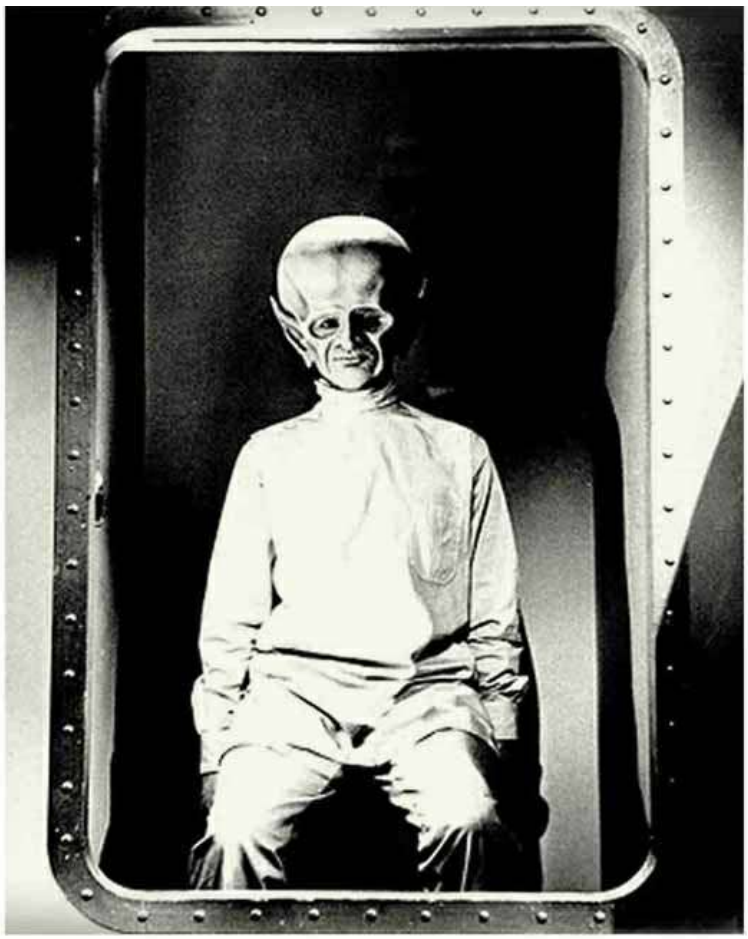
Christopher Knowles has written extensively on his blog, *The Secret Sun*, about Jack Kirby and how he seems to have been tapping into something profoundly mysterious. (linked here) Knowles has "owl" in his name too, but I digress.

THE SIXTH FINGER

This story of "The Watcher" hit the comic book racks in April of 1963, the same year as *The Outer Limits* episode, "The Sixth Finger". This story is also

obsessed with the dilemma of human evolution where we again see the three distinct evolutionary stages beginning with apes moving to modern man, then culminating as a mystical being with an over-sized bald head.

Again, Christopher Knowles has written extensively on the mythic power of *The Outer Limits*, and its overtly prophetic plot points describing the alien abduction lore.



the evolution chamber

In this mythic episode, young Gwyllm Griffiths, played by David McCallum, is introduced to a scientist who is tampering with the evolutionary process. The laboratory is staffed by an enhanced chimpanzee who files the paperwork. Gwyllm jumps at the chance to be the first human subject to step into a secret machine, anything to escape the drudgery of life in a Welsh mining town. The experiment succeeds and he's "evolved" into the future. He emerges from a chamber with a much larger head and a sixth

finger on each hand. He has progressed to a human future with godlike powers. *The Sixth Finger* resonates the same ape/human/God triad as 2001.

PLANET OF THE APES

2001 isn't the only movie from 1968 with apes and astronauts—another masterpiece of cinema, *Planet of the Apes*, premiered that same year.

Charlton Heston plays astronaut Taylor, a parallel to astronaut Dr. David Bowman from 2001, played by Keir Dullea. Both transcend time in a space ship, and arrive at a mysterious place. The script was written by Rod Serling, no stranger to the mythic and metaphoric.

This movie is steeped in secrets about the evolution of apes and humans. Dr. Zaius (Zeus?) is the rule maker in this world, and also the caretaker of the hidden knowledge about the evolutionary history of his planet. He plays the role of Heywood Floyd from 2001; both are the keeper of secrets, and at the heart of a grand cover up.

There are distinct evolutionary phases in *Planet of the Apes*, most clearly seen in the archeological dig inside a cave near the end of the movie. There are three distinct layers, with our present day modern man at the lowest level. This film is upside down compared to 2001.

When Taylor meets with Dr. Zaius in his chambers he asks, "How in Hell did this upside down civilization get started?"

Zaius replies, "You may call it upside down, because you occupy its lowest level!"

Planet of the Apes begins with space travel through a psychedelic stargate, and 2001 ends with a similar transition. The narrative path is upside down compared to its sister movie.

At the lowest level in the dig site, Cornelius (Roddy McDowell) has un-earthed an ancient human baby doll. This doll resonates the big headed alien/fetus meme, complete with gray skin. This doll is the key to unraveling the cover-up held in place by Dr. Zaius.

At one point the chimpanzee scientist Zera (Kim Hunter) shouts at Dr. Zaius, "The proof, the doll!"

The film culminates with Taylor riding off to find "his destiny," to quote Dr. Zaius. This transformative destiny involves dropping to his knees before the goddess Athena, in the form of the Statue of Liberty.

GABRIELLE GIFFORDS

Now here's where things get really weird. When Jared Lee Loughner shot Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords in Tucson in 2011, one of the first doctors to arrive on the scene was *Dr. Dave Bowman*. He attended a wounded 9-year old girl who just happened to be born on September 11th, 2001. She died that day, and her name was Christina-TAYLOR Greene.

Charlton Heston was an astronaut named TAYLOR in *Planet of the Apes*, and Keir Dullea portrays astronaut Dr. Dave Bowman, who returns to earth at the end of 2001 as the fetus like star child. To make things even stranger, Gabrielle Giffords is married to an astronaut!

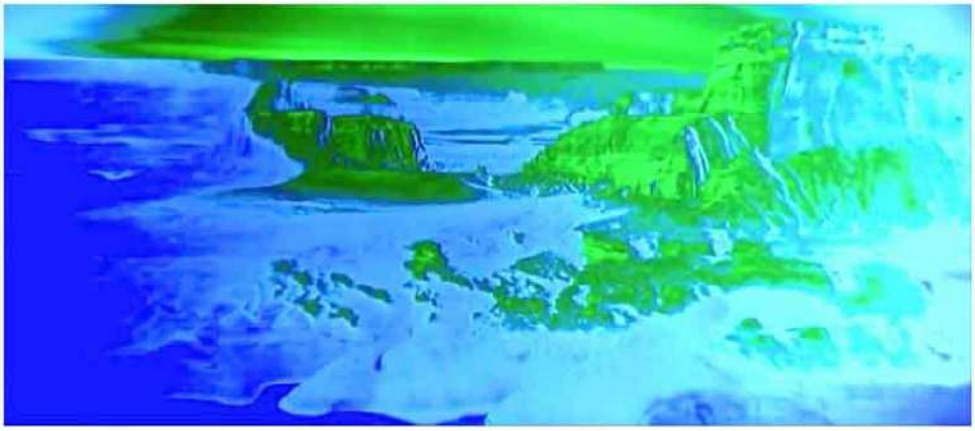
SYNCHRO-ODDITIES

I have been trying to make synchro-connections with two movies, a TV show, a comic book, a book about UFO abductions and a political assassination attempt. In doing so, it seems like attempting to rein in this stuff with any kind of linear logic is useless. So I'm just gonna list some odd interrelations (in no particular order) with bulleted points.

- Christina-Taylor Greene, the girl who died at the Gabrielle Giffords shooting, has the name Christ as the first 6 letters of her name. GREENE is the last 6 letters, and green is the color of Osiris the Egyptian god who represents death and rebirth, and Christ certainly represents the same thing. TAYLOR from *Planet of the Apes* dies and is reborn using a glass chamber and a wormhole. Taylor is a six letter word.

- *Planet of the Apes* premiered on April 3, 1968. And *2001: A Space Odyssey* premiered just three days later on April 6, 1968. Christ was dead for three days before his resurrection.

- *Planet of the Apes* begins with a psychedelic stargate/wormhole sequence, and 2001 ends with something very similar.



Lake Powell at the end of the stargate

Lake Powell at the end of the stargate

- Lake Powell in Utah (Uatu?) is featured in both *Planet of the Apes* and 2001. In each of these movies it appears as the culmination of the trippy stargate voyage through space.

- Lake Powell was used as a location in the 1965 passion play, *The Greatest Story Ever Told*. Charlton Heston is again in Lake Powell, wearing furs instead of a space suit, he portrays John the Baptist, and baptizes Jesus in these same waters. Roddy McDowell plays Matthew, and David McCallum plays Judas Iscariot!

- *2001*, *Planet of the Apes* and *The Watchers* are each, at their core, Ancient Astronaut stories—and on some level, so is *The Greatest Story*

Ever Told.

- Charlton Heston also played Moses and brought down tablets from God to usher in a new age, and a tablet-like monolith appears in 2001 (from God?), again ushering in a new age.

- In 1995, there was an odd bit of black & white 16mm footage showing a supposed "Alien Autopsy", purportedly of a being found at the Roswell crash. The film has since been dismissed as a hoax, but the entity shown has an oversized bald head, and six fingers on each hand.

- Roddy McDowell emerges from a Welsh mining town in John Ford's *How Green Was My Valley,* and he eventually plays the role of Cornelius (a chimpanzee) in 1968. David McCallum emerges from the very same Welsh mining town in *The Sixth Finger;* the film-makers re-used a short establishing shot of the small town from the 1941 film.

- In 1967, Roddy McDowell guest stars in the TV series *The Invaders* as the son of an astrophysicist who was abducted and mind-controlled by aliens. The episode is titled *The Experiment*.

- Roddy McDowell read the audio-book for Whitley Strieber's 1987 best-seller, *Communion*. Let me add that listening to his reading of Strieber's first person narrative is absolutely wonderful. In essence, Roddy McDowell is playing the role of Whitley Strieber!

- Kim Hunter (Zera in *Planet of the Apes*) also played the role of an alien abductee in an episode of *The CBS Radio Mystery Theater* titled *The Sighting*. The set of plot points closely matches many of the elements of the typical UFO abduction account including mind control, telepathy and implants. The original airdate was November 25, 1974, well before the proliferation in the media of abduction accounts. The radio play is linked here.

- Archangel Gabriel appears to Mary and tells her: "And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb..." (Luke 1:31). This conception story sounds

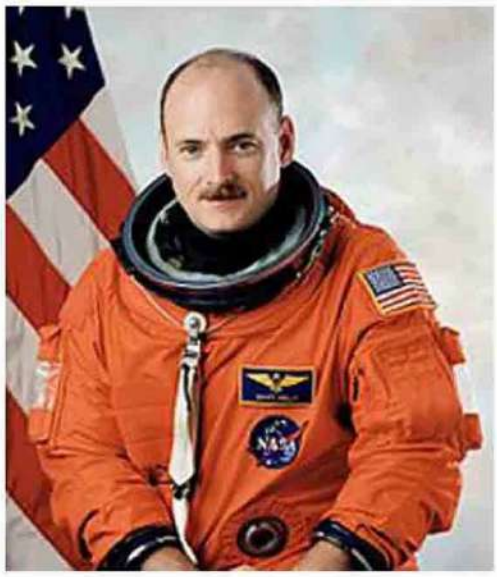
curiously similar to some of the accounts shared by women who claim alien abduction experiences and mysterious pregnancies—often when the women are not sexually active. This certainly parallels The Blessed Virgin.

- Gabriel is the only Archangel depicted as female in art and literature. And the name Gabriel certainly parallels Gabrielle.

- There was another Gabriel involved in the shooting in Tucson. Gabriel "Gabe" Zimmerman, age 30, was a member of Congresswoman Giffords' staff, and was killed that afternoon.

- Giffords' astronaut husband (Mark Kelly) has an identical twin brother (Scott Kelly), who is also an astronaut! Scott Kelly was a pilot for space shuttle *Discovery*, which is also the name of Dr. Dave Bowman's spaceship in 2001. Scott Kelly was in space on board the International Space Station during the shooting, and offered a moment of silence on 1-10-11.

Astronaut Mark Kelly



Astronaut Scott Kelly

- The twin astronauts were born on Feb. 21, 1964. The LIFE magazine cover from that very day shows Lee Harvey Oswald holding a rifle and Communist leaflets. Many researchers of the JFK assassination claim this

photo is faked. Also, many feel that Oswald had a double (or twin) impersonating him in the lead up to that fateful day in Dallas. It's in the public record that LIFE magazine had well established ties to the CIA. Oswald shares the name LEE with Jared LEE Loughner. Both names have 15 letters.

- One would have to assume the NASA astronaut corps are briefed about the reality of the UFO phenomenon—it sure seems they would be prepared in advance in the event they might see something odd out there. I have the sense these folks are probably privy to some seriously insider info about UFOs.

CRYOGENIC TUBES

- *Planet of the Apes* and *2001* both feature cryogenic suspended animation chambers, and these are seen as death chambers in both movies. Glass chambers are also pivotal in *The Sixth Finger* and Ray Fowler's *The Watchers*.

- *The Sixth Finger* begins with an ape who has made an evolutionary leap in a glass chamber, and ends with a modern human making a further evolutionary leap and emerging as a proto-god with an oversized bald head.

- The imagery of the suspended animation glass sarcophagus shows up in UFO abduction lore, with some researchers concluding that there is an ongoing program to create genetically enhanced alien/human hybrids using advanced technologies.

- Abductees will often tell of seeing some form of technological clone nursery while onboard a craft, they'll describe alien/human hybrid fetuses floating in glass tubes. The color of the fluid in these tubes is often reported as blue, and when Taylor enters his glass chamber in the first minutes of *Planet of the Apes*, the image fades to blue, followed by a stargate sequence.

- The illustration below was drawn by Betty Andeasson Luca, and it shows

a series of glass chambers, each displaying a different branch of human evolution. Even Jesus is included!

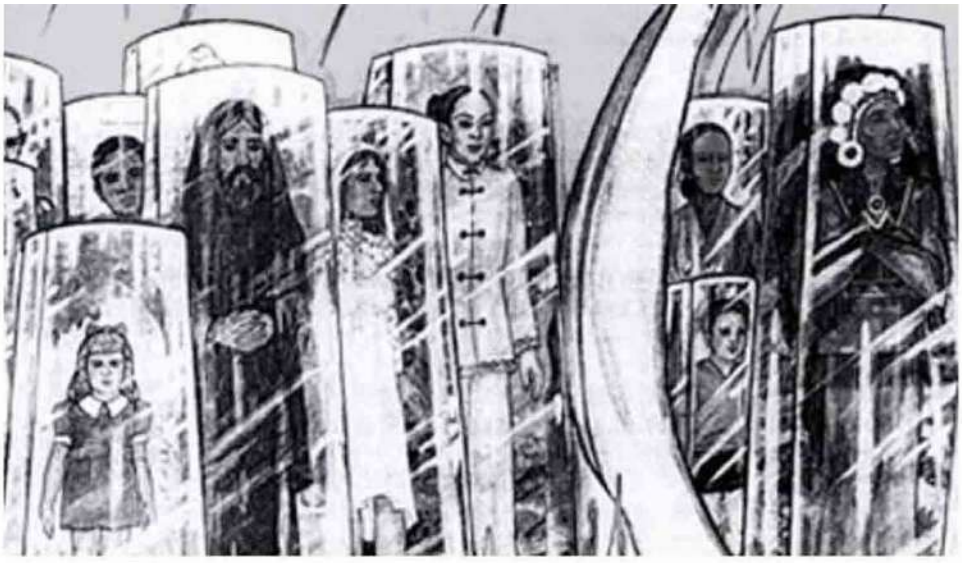


Illustration © Betty Andreasson Luca

> The aliens have spliced into the human seed to prolong the form… so that nothing will be lost when the last shall come. The people of all races and times encased in clear rectangular receptacles" for preservation by the non-human beings… called *The Watchers*, who have monitored the Earth for thousands of years.
>
> —Betty Andreasson Luca, excerpt from *The Watchers*[1]

- The glass tube is a repeating image in the pulp science fiction illustrations and magazine covers of a bygone era, albeit for tawdry psycho-sexual reasons. This rather comical pattern was noted by the late great Mac Tonnies. Lots of odd images here.

THE ECHO CHAMBER

Why do these resonant parallels emerge out of the ether? Is reality a sort of echo chamber, where highly charged ideas and memes bounce off each other in a way that generates these weird synchronicities?

I suspect strongly there is something more at play with the horrendous tragedy surrounding Gabrielle Giffords. Why are there such strange reverberating plot elements to this story? I'm forced to wonder if there might

be a deeper reason behind it all. What that might be, I have no idea. Do powerful human events simply create their own synchronous magic?

My only rule for deciphering synchronicities is to pay attention.

Text added Jan. 2019:

This post emerged in a synchronistic flurry—it felt like it wrote itself! I fully recognize that some of the connections are a bit of a stretch, and I recognized this while writing. After posting it online, I was hit with a slew of 1234 synchronicities, all connected to this frenetic essay. This post appears on the blog with a lot more pictures and links, (linked here), and much of that was trimmed back for this book.

Author Nick Redfern said this about my rather frazzled essay, “Mike, This is a crazily, insanely, fascinating post—and I do mean that as a complement! Mind-screwing!!!”

This long-winded post has been extremely popular in a way that really surprised me. It would not have been possible without the inspiration from two synchro-mystics, Christopher Knowles and Alan Abbadessa Green.

David Bowie, owls and Labyrinth

Wednesday, January 13, 2016

There's a curious set of symbolic events that play out in the 1986 film *Labyrinth*. Early on in the story, a child is taken from his crib by small beings. There is a white barn owl watching through a window during this "bedroom abduction" scene. That owl later transforms into David Bowie.

Labyrinth was a fantasy directed by Muppet creator Jim Henson, with George Lucas as executive director. Teenager Jennifer Connelly confronts Jareth the Goblin King (Bowie) in a puppet filled dream realm. Author Joshua Cutchin feels that this movie "has the most thematically accurate portrayals of the fae folk in cinema." Like Jacques Vallee, Cutchin argues that the ancient faerie mythology seems to parallel the modern UFO abduction lore.

Bowie certainly resonates as an alien after *Ziggy Stardust* and *The Man Who Fell to Earth*. He does so again as an owl "watcher" in the bedroom abduction scene.

1986 was also the year Whitley Strieber wrote the book *Communion*. This is the first popular reference to owls outside a window at the moment of an alien abduction, that is if you don't include *Labyrinth*. Bowie also starred in the film adaptation of Strieber's book *The Hunger* (1983), and Strieber has speculated that the vampires in that book were his own subconscious metaphors for gray aliens.

Both Connelly and her little brother could be seen as UFO abductees, both transported to another realm against their will. There is ample evidence within the abduction literature that these experiences run in families.

The title track in Bowie's album *Underground* (where the faerie folk typically reside) was used in *Labyrinth*. This song features the lyrics "It's only forever... not long at all." This sounds suspiciously like the missing time reported in both faerie land and UFO contact.

The movie is awash in mythic imagery and names, which was obviously intentional by the filmmakers. For example, Connelly's companion sheep dog was named "Merlin," and it barked at the owl. This seems a reference to T. H. White's *Sword in the Stone*.

In the mythic tradition of the hero's journey, Connelly is tested by Bowie in a giant maze filled with puppets. Like Jennifer Connelly, there is another J.C. who is tested in a mythic book, this time by the Devil while alone in the desert.

This movie offers up plenty of associations with owls and UFO abduction, suggesting some forethought on the part of the scriptwriters. Alas, I feel strongly that these connections arose unconsciously, and for me this is *much* more interesting.

The final scene shows Jennifer Connelly back home in her Muppet filled bedroom, with the David Bowie owl peering into her window. I gotta say, this is a creepy way to end a children's movie.

More about Labyrinth and its (rather accurate) depiction of the Fae Folk from author Joshua Cutchin, here. I need to thank Joshua for some excellent insights included in this post.

Also of note: David Bowie has an album titled LOW.

An owl ushers in alien contact in Pinocchio

Sunday, February 15, 2015

An owl makes an appearance in Disney's Pinocchio (1940), and there's a lot in the scene that got my attention. Early in the film, Jiminy Cricket sings the *When You Wish Upon a Star* in Geppetto's workshop at night. After the song ends, he lies down on a violin and tries to sleep, but the room is full of ticking clocks. He tries to stare down an owl clock with huge eyes bouncing from side to side, and he seems to go into a trance as if hypnotized by the owl. The ticking builds and builds until Jiminy screams, "Quiet!"

With that, all the pendulums of all the clocks stop in unison—*time stands still!*

This hushed moment marks the grand entrance of the Blue Fairy. She first descends from the heavens as a star, then enters the workshop through an open window as an orb of shimmering light, finally morphing into the Blue Fairy. She touches the inanimate Pinocchio with her magic wand and says, "Little puppet made of pine, awake! The gift of life is granted."

The scene plays out as a UFO bedroom visitation, where in some sense, the DNA of the inanimate puppet is upgraded into some in between state—no longer a puppet, but not yet a real human. This mirrors a lot of the ancient alien lore, where intervention by beings from the stars tamper with genetics to create modern humans.

Jiminy Cricket (an insectoid!) is christened as Pinocchio's conscious by the Blue Fairy in a ritual act involving a magic wand. Presently, the UFO field is all hot about "consciousness", and this has become a buzzword for the more elusive aspects of the contact experience.

So, an owl symbol (in the form of a clock) punctuates the arrival of the Blue Fairy; tall, blond and beautiful, she personifies a Pleiadean Nordic.

The work of Jacques Valle is vital for connecting the modern UFO abduction stories to ancient faerie mythologies. Both *Passport to Magonia* (1969) and *Dimensions* (1988) are required reading.

Later, the Blue Fairy shows up again to bring a dead mutant donkey puppet hybrid back to life—more genetic tampering!

Jesus was also ushered in at birth by a star from the heavens. Like the

story of Jesus, the finale of *Pinocchio* involves death and resurrection.

Whitley Strieber also wrote about his youthful fear of a cat-clock (the kind with the big eyes that moved with each click). The implication being that the big eyes on the clock reminded him of the big eyed alien visitors. The owl clock in Pinocchio looks suspiciously like one of those cat-clocks.

These little plot points from a fairy tale movie aren't meant to imply some grand conspiracy on the part of the filmmakers. Instead, I sense the same elements that make up the modern UFO abduction lore have been part of our mythology and consciousness throughout the ages. This heightened imagery has a curious way of welling up within our pop-culture.

Big thanks to a blog-reader (an owl experiencer!) who pointed out the owl and fairy connection in Pinocchio.

Text added later the same day:

This kind of connect-the-dots riffing can be a bottomless pit. Several commenters correctly point out that Spielberg's 2001 film, *A.I. Artificial Intelligence,* is a reworking of Pinocchio, as well as a reworking of a script from Mr. 2001 himself, Stanley Kubrick.

The alien/fairy connection is hammered home in this mess of a film. The finale of the Kubrick/Spielberg film has CGI gray aliens watching as a virtual reality Blue Fairy resurrects a cybernetic robot into a real-boy.

UFOs get mentioned in MAD MEN

Sunday, June 12, 2011

I had a curious thing happen over the winter while watching an episode of the television drama MAD MEN titled: *The Good News* (season 4, episode 3).

At about the 12 minute mark, Don Draper and a two women are having a conversation in a small dimly lit restaurant. While watching, I had the strangest sort of daydream—*what if I was in that restaurant, sitting at the table with those fictional people?* I wanted to ask these fake TV characters their views about the UFO phenomenon.

The episode took place in 1965, a time when the world hadn't been quite as saturated on the topic of UFOs. I sat there watching and a vivid narrative played out in my head. I would ask them questions in the hopes of getting a different perspective on this stuff.

This was really odd. I'm not kidding, I wanted to enter the fictional scene and *ask the characters about UFOs!* This simply doesn't happen, but it did that night and it was decidedly unusual.

They drove home from the restaurant, followed by a curious scene the next morning in the full light of day. Don Draper is seen painting the wall (in his underwear) at the woman's house. The character's name is Anna, and she sat on the couch watching him as they talked.

Then, at the 21:20 time count, Anna said something that got my attention.

> **Anna:** *I've seen UFOs.*
>
> **Don:** You saw a UFO?
>
> **Anna:** Does that scare you, the idea of another civilization on another planet smart enough to find a way to get here?
>
> **Don:** It doesn't scare me, but the odds are against it.
>
> **Anna:** Well I saw something once, and I'm telling you, it knocked me sideways. I started thinking of everything I was sure was true, and how flimsy it all might be.
>
> **Don:** You don't need to see a UFO to know that. That's not a great way to think about things.

So, I had a lucid thought where I projected myself into a TV drama. I wanted to ask the characters their views on UFOs, and within minutes I get their answer. I'm not sure what it means, but lemme tell you, it felt strange.

Note that Anna says: "I've seen UFOs." Plural!

Any UFO investigator would take note of her comment. Multiple UFO sightings might imply she was an abductee.

The episode predates the 1966 publication of John G. Fuller's *The Interrupted Journey*, the story of Betty and Barney Hill's abduction account, and the first such book in any popular form. The title of the episode, *The Good News*, is often used as a synonym for the New Testament and the teachings of Jesus.

The character who sees the UFO is Anna Draper, the widow of the *actual* Don Draper (her husband died in the Korean war and the star of the show stole his identity). She was played by the actress Melinda Page Hamilton, and she shares my birthday, August 22. She was born in 1974, the year of my missing time experience as a 12-year old boy. So, the actress playing a UFO witness with multiple sightings shares my birthday.

The death of Jessica Redfield

Saturday, July 21, 2012

young sports reporter Jessica Redfield

Jessica Ghawi died in the early hours of Friday July 20. She was one of the victims of the mass shooting at a movie theater in Aurora, Colorado. She also went by the name Jessica Redfield (because of her red hair) in her role as a young sports reporter in Denver. She was 24 years old.

Here's something very strange—Redfield was also present at a public shooting in a mall in Toronto less than two months ago on June 2, 2012. A mass shooting took place at a crowded food court in the Eaton Centre Mall where five people were shot, and two people died.

She had a blog with only two posts. One was about men and hockey, and the other was written two days after her experience in Toronto. Tragically, she died by gunfire in a Colorado theater 48 days later.

She wrote about the experience in her blog (slightly edited excerpt below), and what she shares is chilling.

Late Night Thoughts on the Eaton Center Shooting

by Jessica Redfield, June 5, 2012

I can't get this odd feeling out of my chest. This empty, almost sickening feeling won't go away. I noticed this feeling when I was in the Eaton Center in Toronto just seconds before someone opened fire in the food court. An odd feeling which led me to go outside and unknowingly out of harm's way. It's hard for me to wrap my mind around how a weird feeling saved me from being in the middle of a deadly shooting.

What started off as a trip to the mall to get sushi and shop, ended up as a day that has forever changed my life. I was on a mission to eat sushi that day, and when I'm on a mission, nothing will deter me. When I arrived at the Eaton Center mall, I walked down to the food court and spotted a sushi restaurant. Instead of walking in, sitting down and enjoying sushi, I changed my mind, which is very unlike me, and decided that a greasy burger and poutine would do the trick. I rushed through my dinner. I found out [later] after seeing a map of the scene, that minutes later a man was standing in the same spot I just ate at and opened fire in the food court full of people. Had I had sushi, I would've been in the same place where one of the victims was found.

My receipt shows my purchase was made at 6:20 p.m. After that purchase I said I felt funny. It wasn't the kind of funny you feel after spending money you know you shouldn't have spent. It was almost a panicky feeling that left my chest feeling like something was missing. A feeling that was overwhelming enough to lead me to head outside in the rain to get fresh air instead of continuing back into the food court to go shopping... The gunshots rung out at 6:23. Had I not gone outside, I would've been in the midst of gunfire.

...I wish I could shake this odd feeling from my chest. The feeling that's reminding me how blessed I am. The same feeling that made me leave the Eaton Center. The feeling that may have potentially saved my life.

There are a lot of mainstream news sources that point to this disturbing blog post. The strange premonition and the dark synchronicity wasn't lost on anyone.

The Hebrew name Jessica means foresight, or clairvoyance.

I didn't really do all that much online searching, but there is something within Jessica's tragic story that resonates with the color red. I will simply list some thoughts.

- For her role as a sports reporter, she changed her name to Redfield. She did this because it was easier to pronounce than Ghawi. She chose the name Redfield because of her red hair.

- In a video report, she was described as a firecracker (red) by her boss at FOX (also red) news station in Denver.

- Colorado means "colored red"

- The gunman, James Eagan Holmes, had dyed his hair bright red.

- Aurora means: The reddish or greenish lights in the sky seen near the magnetic poles.

- She is praise by her friends as having a HUGE HEART.

- There is a twitter image of her RED sunburned back where she states: “So, uh, THIS happened. Help.”

A week before the shooting in the theater, Jessica was in a creepy tomato battle in Denver. This was a fundraising event in a parking lot, where trucks loaded with over ripened tomatoes were supplied for participants to throw at each other. Her Twitter feed is still online, featuring three pictures of the tomato fight. It’s impossible to look at these images without feeling the weight of premonition. One photo shows her in a crowd where everyone is splattered red. Jessica looks miserable.

She commented on that photo: “To those wishing there were there: tomatoes were rotten. I threw up multiple times. The smell was vile & damp; so was texture.”

Jessica (at right), her Twitter photo and comment:
"Aftermath of the tomato fight. Sweet Jesus"
(time stamp 3:33 PM)

I would not have shared this disturbing image on my blog if it weren't for the 3:33 p.m. time-count on her twitter post—333 is a number repeatedly noted by UFO experiencers.

One of the other images is equally disturbing, and she tagged it: "Absolutely. Disgusting." She also includes the name Jesus in one of her comment.

There is something eerie about reading through someone's blog and twitter posts after they have died. It was unsettling to look at these online photographs after such a horrendous event.

Jessica's boyfriend was Jay Melhoff, an NHL hockey player who was in Toronto at the time of the shooting. He was number 23 (hello Robert Anton Wilson) while playing for the Danbury Wailers last season. He is hoping to play for the Denver Cutthroats (a fish noted for its RED throat).

There was a new article about Melhoff on the day of Jessica's death, it was titled, *Meet Jay Melhoff: Heart and Soul Player*.

The author, Cheryl Bradley, added this to the end of the article: “About the time I finished this feature on Jay Meloff on Thursday night and submitted it for posting, Jay’s girlfriend, Jessica Ghawi, known to her friends across the sports world as Jessica Redfield, was killed in an Aurora, Colorado, theater.”

This is Jessica’s final tweet, approximately two-hours before her death. She wrote:

> Of course we’re seeing Dark Knight. Readheaded Texas spitfire, people should never argue with me. Maybe I should get in on those NHL talks…
> —10:22 p.m., 19 July 2012

The events in Aurora were a tragedy, and I don’t want to come across like I’m making light of something so horrible. Creating this post and connecting these dots has been strange and emotional.

I feel strongly that highly charged human events (like Aurora, 9-11 and the Gabrielle Giffords shooting) have a resonance that can generate their own synchronicities. I don’t know if there’s any dark conspiracies at play in Jessica’s story, yet things have happened that are beyond coincidence. It feels as if mythic archetypes and symbols have emerged and are intertwining within these narratives.

I don’t know the source of these powerful synchronicities—perhaps this is nothing more than the way the universe likes to organize itself.

12

THE MOST READ POSTS

Maybe stories are just data with a soul.
— Brené Brown

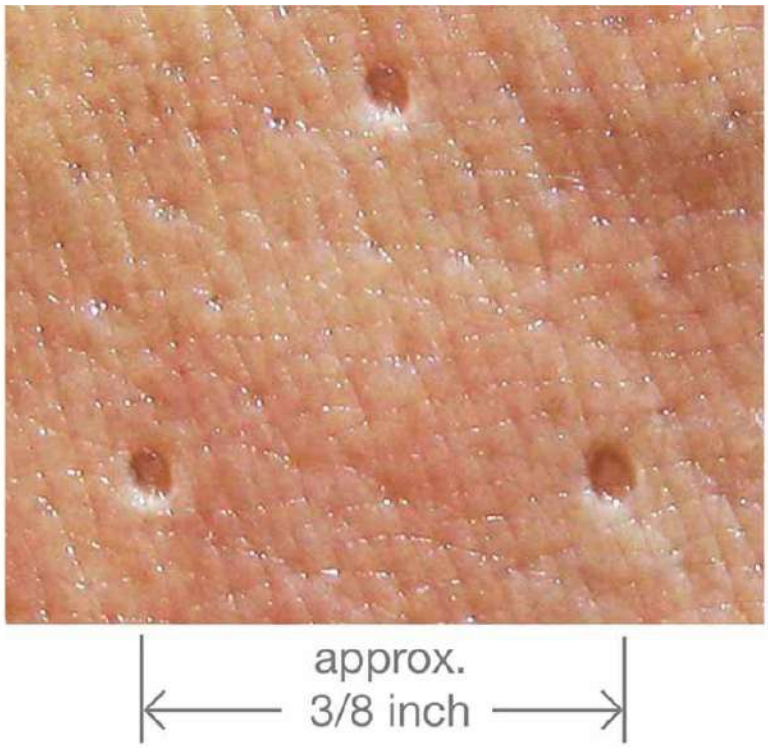
There’s a statistics page on my blog where I can check the ranking of page views for the posts, and some have been wildly popular in a way that has surprised me. Some seem obvious, like one titled *Fireball*. I suspect anyone who sees a fireball will search for info online, and many end up at my blog. I think the popularity of the posts are more about things that are searched, rather than the power of my writing.

The one exception in the most popular posts is the long format essay, *Owls and the UFO abductee*. This later grew by a factor of ten and became the book, *The Messengers*.

A few of these popular posts are peppered elsewhere in the book, in chapters that are more fitting to the subject. The previous story about Jessica Redfield is the seventh most popular post on the blog.

Tiny dots in a triangle on my left arm

Sunday, August 29, 2010



a recreation of how the dots looked in the mid-1970s

"*Do you have any unusual marks or scars on your body?"* This is a question asked by abduction researchers.

I've spoken to several of these researchers, and they've all asked me this question—and I've answered no. Yet recently, I've realized that I do have an unusual mark on my left arm. I have a funny triangle of three marks near my wrist, and I remember them from my childhood.

Only two of the dots remain distinct. The third has almost completely faded away, and can only be seen in certain light.

As best as I can recall, I've had these marks since elementary school, and that means sometime before 1974. I've just turned 48, so these three dots have been on my arm for at least 36 years. As a boy, I would marvel at the perfection of the triangular shape. Each dot is tiny circular pit, sized in a way

that the head of a pin head could set within the shallow indentations.

I have no memory of receiving any sort of medical inoculation, so if this is simply a vaccine scar—someone PLEASE tell me. I did a quick online search for “vaccine scars” and “inoculation scars,” and saw a lot of images (some quite gruesome), but none even remotely matched what I have on my arm.

I took some photos of the marks today. I first shaved the hair off this small area, then put a little vegetable oil on the site. This made my skin shiny, and helped bring out the dots. I then stood next to a window and took macro photos with a digital camera in the bright sunshine. Using Photoshop, I increased the contrast on the images. This helped bring out the tiny dots a little more clearly.

red traingle notes the
the position of the dots on my arm

close-up image, the red circle
notes the site of the faded dot, still slightly visable

(photos from August 2010)

A note about the images in this post: One is an unaltered photo, and the other is a photoshop recreation as to how they appeared in my youth. The dots are all approximately 3/8 of an inch apart from each other.

‘Triangle scar + left arm’ searched online

Saturday, June 11, 2011

There is a curious statistic on the sidebar of this site. Scroll down and look at the little box titled: Most read posts on this site, ever. The majority are audio interviews with popular authors, but the number one listing seems out of place. It’s a post I did last summer titled: *Tiny dots on my left arm.*

Why is this post so popular? It’s baffled me, until this morning.

I recently looked at my stat-counter and found where I could check “Keyword Analysis,” and the fourth most common way people arrive at my site is by searching out this phrase: “triangle scar left arm”

The implication is that people from around the world are using Google as a tool to search out information about triangle scars on their own arms. Since last summer, I’ve received a handful of comments and emails where people have told me they have the exact same scar, or something very similar. The reports I’m getting are almost all on describing three dots on their left arm.

The fact that this somewhat obscure post is so popular seems to indicate that there are a lot of people out there with similar scars, and they’re seeking answers. The implications are extremely curious, at least to me.

Text added Nov. 2018:

This has been and continues to be, *by far*, the most popular post on this blog, both in the number of hits and comments. I have to wonder if these triangular scars, my own included, came from some unremembered UFO contact event. If so, the implications of the popularity of this post are unsetting.

Dolores Cannon and synchronicity

Sunday, October 19, 2014

Yesterday morning, Dolores Cannon died peacefully in her home with her family at her side. She was 83 years old. I heard the news of her passing yesterday afternoon from a message on Facebook. Later that evening while at my desk, I heard a 'ping' from my computer signaling an email had arrived.

It was from Katy Walker, and she wrote:

> Hey Mike, have you thought about having Dolores on the show? This book is fascinating. I'm trying her technique this next week, where you bypass the fear and can recall clear memories. I'll be asking about our experiences and let you know if anything comes up. Here's the pdf version of one of her books.

There was an attached PDF of *The Custodians*, the only book of Dolores' that I own and have read.

While reading this email from Katy, my computer started pinging, and I watched as 19 more emails arrived in my in-box, all of them the same message from Katy. I sat there for the next couple of minutes and watched (and listened) as these duplicates arrived one after another.

I replied to Katy and told her the sad news, that Dolores had died that morning, and also that my inbox had been flooded with her repeating messages. She replied, "Sorry about that, it's bizarre, I was just trying to send one email, very strange, not sure how that happened."

It was just two days ago that I'd finalized a short essay about Dolores for my upcoming owl book. In her book *The Custodians*, she describes seeing an owl in the road near her home in Arkansas; it was impossibly large, and tall enough to stare at her over the hood of her truck. This happened on the night she was trying to decide if she should step out of the comfortable confines of her family therapy practice, and step into UFO research.[2]

Katy is also featured in this owl book—she was part of a film crew that caught a UFO on video while shooting images of owls for a documentary on synchronicity.[3]

So, two people are connected with this odd event—well, three if you include me. All of us are featured in the owl book project, and this string of

twenty repeated messages about Dolores Cannon arrived on the day of her passing.

This is an example of how synchronicities can get entwined around highly charged events, and it might be impossible to untangle all the divergent elements. The owl plays an important role in this story, and it’s also the symbol of traveling to the land of the dead, then returning with a message.

Fireball

Thursday, April 30, 2009

view from my window

In February of this year, I saw something interesting. It was late and I was walking around my cabin shutting the lights off before going to bed. I passed by a big window facing south, and saw a very bright orange ball of flame streak downward to the horizon.

It was quite impressive in the night sky, yet only lasted a second or so. It was a perfect fireball with a long tail of flames, and I'll add that it looked sort of cartoony.

I didn't think much of it. I was in my house, so there's no way of knowing if it made any sound. It looked like it was way off in the distance, and over the mountains to the south.

It seemed like a completely natural event, yet I had a curious feeling that I'd seen this before. I calmly thought, "Oh, this again."

I turned off the lights and went to bed.

Text added on Feb 9, 2012:

A fireball is simply an especially bright meteor, so I was lucky enough to see a rare event in the night sky. But I just realized that looking out this window to the south, at that time on that date, the fireball would've lined up very near the star Sirius. This probably doesn't mean much, but Sirius is the brightest star in the night sky, and also ties into a whole slew of UFO lore.

Text added on Oct 28, 2014:

As of today, this post has had more hits than any other post on this site —*ever!* I'm not exactly sure why, perhaps people are searching out the word *fireball*. If anyone around the world googles that word, this post (with its one word headline) will probably show up. So, its popularity might be nothing more than that.

I have Rh negative blood

Thursday, March 29, 2012

I just did a home test to determine my blood type. I pricked my finger with a needle, smeared a dot of blood in four separate circles on a card, waited a minute then used a chart to determine that I'm A negative. That means I'm type A, with a negative Rh factor.

If anyone has been following what's going on the UFO abduction research circles, you'll know that there's a lot of buzz about blood type and how it might be connected with abductees.

I just attended a UFO conference, and *everyone* was asking each other about their blood type. I've been trying to understand what all the hubbub is about, and it hasn't been easy. The internet is a bottomless pit of confusing information, so it's near impossible to make sense of what any of this might actually mean.

Here's what I know—there is a plus or minus sign after the blood type letter, denoting either positive or negative Rh factor, and approximately 15% of the world's population is Rh negative.

Here's where it gets interesting—according to some researchers, 54% of UFO abductees have the Rh negative factor. There are statistics online that imply even higher numbers, that 60% to 75% of UFO abductees are Rh negative, yet I can't find any follow up documentation. If this is true, even the more conservative 54% is a very curious statistical anomaly.

The implication is that UFO abductees have a disproportionally higher rate of Rh negative blood than the average population, and if true, that's a big deal.

I've done a minimal amount of online research, and here's what I can say: There's a lot of eagerness in the UFO community to connect the Rh factor to abduction, but the online data is wildly inconsistent. I'm totally confused about the whole thing.

As an aside, my father has O Negative blood, the universal donor.

Text added Nov. 2018:

There's been some new data since the publication of this post. Rey

Hernandez was part of a team of academics (The Dr. Edgar Mitchell Foundation for Research into Extraterrestrial and Extraordinary Experiences) that organized a comprehensive international research project to study Experiencers. They address the blood type, and of the more than 3,300 people questioned, 14.5% stated that they were Rh Negative. The study concluded that the Rh factor among experiencers is essentially the same as the general public, which is around 15%.

Their findings would seem to make this post irrelevant. I've included it in the book because it's been extremely popular.

Steven Spielberg's E.T. and owls

Thursday, November 23, 2017

I watched Steven Spielberg's *E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial* for the second time last night. The only other time I'd seen it was in the theater back in 1982, thirty-five years ago. I remember I didn't really like it much—I was 20 years old, and had already dropped out of NYU film school. At the time, my tastes in cinema were more along the lines of John Ford and Michelangelo Antonioni.

But in this recent re-watching, one thing caught my eye, a sequence that involved an owl! Early on in the film, the camera is slowly panning around the drippy wet interior of the UFO. It was a kind of terrarium setting where the little ETs had been collecting plant samples, seemingly from around the galaxy. It opens on giant mushrooms (did Terence McKenna notice this?), then the camera smoothly passes by the trunk of a tree with the archetypal face of the Green Man.

The face in this sequence is a sort of puppet, and it moves its lips as if it were sighing. This happens at exactly the 3:33 time-count.

Then there's a cut to the exterior, and we see a bunch of cuddly ETs wobbling around the forest in front of their craft. We hear the hooting of a great horned owl, and all the little beings stop. It's silent for a moment, all their heart chakras glow red, and then there's a little John Williams crescendo to punctuate the scene.

So, here we have (at the time) the highest grossing movie in the history of film, with an overt owl and UFO reference. *The call of an owl makes ET's hearts radiate!*

To make this all the more engaging, there's an appearance of the Green Man just seconds before the hooting owl.

The Green Man is a pre-Christian nature deity, a totem of the forest. His face is made up of leaves and bark, and can be found in medieval churches all across Europe. In Celtic lore he represents the coming of spring, and is often portrayed with acorns.

The Green Man is centered in the frame at 3:33, and the owl hoots seven seconds later. The number 3:33 shows up repeatedly in new-age circles, as

well as within UFO abduction lore.

There is another great horned owl heard hooting later in the film, just as ET and Elliott rig up the distress beacon made of toys. This is the communication machine used for, “ET phone home.” Perhaps the owl shows up at that moment to represent *The Messenger*.

13

IN THE FLOW

The only way to make sense out of change is to plunge into it, move with it, and join the dance.

— Alan Wilson Watts

The blog had become a way to wrestle with my demons, and for a few years this was an obsession. There were some wonderful points where I got into a flow, and lost myself in the site. For awhile I was posting a lot, and took the work seriously. There was plenty of introspection, but I also tried to offer up some variety, ranging from somber to humorous.

The blog became a means to address the questions I had about myself, and the writing was a way confront my doubts and fears. I was unloading my madness onto the internet for the world to see. The blog was my therapy.

The pecan tree

Wednesday, March 18, 2015

I've sat in on a handful of support groups specifically for people who feel they are UFO experiencers. One question I've asked repeatedly in these groups is if anyone has ever experienced a dream like distorted sensation in relation to any kind of UFO contact, and shared my story of seeing the five beings in 1993 as a way to explain these very odd feelings. This hyper-vivid sensation is covered in depth in a post titled: *Looking out my window at night*.

A woman took me aside in the hall after one of these meetings, and was cautious as she spoke. She told of being outside in her yard alone, and that she went up to a tree to pick some pecans. After collecting a handful from the branches, she started walking back to the house. Then she stopped and turned around for a moment to face the tree, at that point she felt a distorted sense of reality. The sensation didn't last long, and the next thing she remembered was sitting alone at her kitchen table. It was hours later, and she had no memory of how she'd gotten there.

I thought for a moment and asked, "Why did you turn around when you were heading back towards the house?"

She said, "I wanted to thank the tree for giving me the pecans."

That one small detail, *wanting to formally thank the tree*, changed the entire tone of her story.

There is something so beautiful about that simple act of being grateful, and acknowledging it. For me, this added a deeper meaning to this woman's experience.

The lesson I learned is it's important to push beyond the dry nuts and bolts of pragmatic inquiry. I need to ask deeper questions.

One year old

Tuesday, March 2, 2010

As of today, this blog is one year old. Something has happened to me since the first post. I've changed.

This is the 82nd post. The first posting was on March 3, 2009, this was a short essay about my cat and how she plays with string, and the very first comment was from Mac Tonnies.

A lot has happened in the last year. Before writing this, I carefully (and slowly) scrolled through the entire archive, something I hadn't done until now. I've been extremely careful not to add anything extraneous or off-topic to this site. Believe me, I've found plenty of really interesting online articles that I could have shared, but chose not to. This blog, whatever it is, seems to want to remain focused on my own experiences. True to the title of the blog, something seems hidden from me, but I can't quite define what that might be.

Re-reading my earlier posts, it's obvious I was swallowed up in an anxious set of emotions, and it's not easy looking at some of that stuff. Much of that urgency has subsided, but it hasn't entirely disappeared. That earnest feeling has its own energy, and it pushes me forward like a detective in a mystery novel.

I've met some wonderful new friends as a result of this blog, and that means more to me than I could possibly share in just words. My email inbox is now loaded with correspondence from people directly affected by the same curious phenomenon that seems to be interacting with me, and this communication has been profoundly rewarding. I'm also receiving emails from people who are eager to share their stories, which are often eerily similar to my own. They're reaching out to me, and it feels good that maybe my writing can be helpful to them.

I have no idea where this strange path may lead. Maybe someday all this weirdness will come to a screeching halt, but I don't think so. All I can say for sure is that I will be as honest as I can be as I proceed forward.

The limitation of assumptions

Thursday, November 8, 2012

> *I think the reality of what is going on is FAR STRANGER than the theories we've come up with. I think the idea of extraterrestrials is nowhere near as strange as what it actually is.*
> — Meghan

I completely agree. This quote arrived as part of a comment on a recent post about owls. It came from a young woman who has had her own set of very confusing experiences, and she managed to sum up this collective weirdness in two shining sentences.

I struggle with the tiny box that the ETH (Extraterrestrial Hypothesis) creates. Every time I use the word *alien*, I feel a need to follow up with a long-winded declarative statement like this:

"That word implies something that may or may not be accurate, because all the collective issues surrounding that feeble term are far too simplistic. *We are trying to define what is undefinable.* We are only getting fleeting glimpses from something behind the veil of the unknowable. We are doing a terrible disservice to our own fragile ideas by assuming that what is reported is an alien in the pop-culture sense of the word."

Instead, I just type *alien* and continue on. This always feels like a cop out.

There are a few different definitions in the dictionary for alien, and one of them is: "differing in nature or character typically to the point of incompatibility." Given that, I feel okay using the word alien.

Brian Short left a comment:

Aside from my own involvement with this – whatever that may or may not amount to – it is exactly this quality of strange beyond strangeness that has me so fascinated by the phenomenon. Any attempt to describe it brings me right up against the limits both of language (insofar as I have any command of it) and of my imagination; which senses its own finiteness, and which strains to expand toward this thing.

Suzanne Chancellor left a comment:

Love it, Mike. I have to agree with you wholeheartedly. As I have “grown up” from the wee one who was just beginning this very alien experience, I have come to realize that there is definitely more to this whole thing than meets the eye, and has made me question what is real, or if it’s just an illusion...

Jack left a comment:

Maybe we should use the term “unknowns” or “unrecognized”, seems to me “they” have been around us for a long time, more than likely well before our beginnings.

Think of it this way, when we are born and up until the time we start to be able to form thoughts and are cognizant of the world around us we have no idea who, let’s say our grandparents are. We just know they talk to us, pamper us and interact with us. We have no words yet and have no idea who they are, we just know they are there.

So as of yet we have no words or concept of who they are because we are still infants who haven’t developed the capacity to understand what’s going on all around us.

A coyote arrives at a relevant moment

Saturday, May 12, 2012

I was talking on Skype with a woman from California, her name is Suzanne Chancellor. She is a contactee with her own radio show where she shares her personal experiences. She was asking me why I've never contacted Mike Lewis (pseudonym) about the night in 1974. She was calling me on my weakness.

I told her I was terrified with what he might say. I was really freaked out by the synchronistic way Mike and I got in contact through Facebook. That was in the summer of 2009, and the story is told in and earlier post, *The universe answers my plea*. At that point, I was definitely not ready to confront him about 1974.

Our conversation continued, and I rambled for a bit trying to collect my thoughts, then I said:

> You know, I think I am at a place now where I can deal with it, and I don't think in 2009, when I re-connected with Mike Lewis, I don't think I could have handled it, *I think I can handle it now*, I really was fragile at that point…

Right at that moment, exactly as I spoke those words, I saw a coyote trot across my yard. It was right outside my window, only a few yards from my desk.

I exclaimed to Suzanne that I'd just seen a coyote, then immediately asked: "What was I saying, just now?"

I realized this was the first time I'd truly ever said those words, or even felt them—I spoke them clearly and it felt honest. All this happened while Suzanne was playing the encouraging role of mentor. I've lived in this house for almost 19 years, and this is the first time I'd ever seen a Coyote in my yard.

I recorded the call and linked a (slightly) edited audio of our conversation, complete with my surprised voice when the coyote trots across my line of sight. This audio is interesting because both of us are totally open in the way we've wrestled with these intertwined issues.

The audio conversation between myself and Suzanne is linked here, it's

about 14 minutes long.

After the call ended, I searched online for Coyote information. This is from Diana's Animal Spirit Guide site:

- Childhood trust in truth
- Coyote is the anti-hero whose antics make it easier to see ourselves
- Teaching balance between risk and safety
- Understanding that all things are sacred—yet nothing is sacred
- Teaching that only when all masks have fallen will we connect with the Source
- Ability to laugh at one's own mistakes

This coyote thing happened shortly after meeting Suzanne online. We've since become close friends and she's edited two of my books, *Stories from The Messengers* and the one you are reading now. There is no one else on earth who has scrutinized my experiences with such a watchful eye.

Suzanne has been a comrade in all this, and I'm enormously grateful for her friendship.

Text added June 2019:

I called Mike Lewis, nothing much came of our conversation. This is covered earlier in a post titled *The universe answers my plea*.

Email correspondence

Monday, December 26, 2011

Here's a back and forth set of emails I had with a fellow named Dennis (a pseudonym). We've spoken on the phone a lot, and he's shared some intense memories. This all falls into the elusive construct of what could be called the UFO abduction phenomenon. But it gets weirder—his experiences include Bigfoot, and the ever-present synchronicities.

I thought our email conversation was interesting, so I'm sharing it here.

Dennis: So I've been thinking about a couple things you said during our last conversation. You talked about seeing five aliens in your yard, and marveled at the level of denial which took place.

I've been wondering where your process is because it seems like there has been a large shift in your thinking.

Mike: You ask about my process? Hahahahaha

My process is sorta all over the map. I say the same thing over and over and over. I have all these puzzle pieces that are interlocked on the table, and they absolutely make a picture. There are pieces missing, and I can infer what's in those blank spots. I'm left to conclude that I am an alien abductee, but without absolutely knowing what's inside those blank areas, it just feels dishonest to make that claim.

So, I go right up to the line with how I present myself. I say (rather awkwardly) that I am someone who might have, maybe, experienced some sort of contact event in my life, but it might have been on some dream-like or ethereal level that's hard to explain. Maybe, sorta, kinda.

I'll periodically say to myself, *SCREW IT! I should just declare what I suspect is true!* But (as I said above), it just wouldn't feel honest without some direct memory.

I've been told by psychics (more than one) that I came to the earth plane after consciously choosing *NOT* to remember these

experiences, and for some reason there is a purpose to this *NOT* knowing. As strange as that sounds, this seems to "feel" like a truism.

I think my personal level of acceptance or denial can waver on a sort of continuum, depending on how the wind blows.

How's that for a wishy-washy reply?

Dennis: I really enjoyed your response to where's your process… I could relate very well to what you wrote. There was a time when I was exploring the "reality" of my experiences (while having very clear memories… how's *that* for denial) and often felt very conflicted about their nature.

I don't think that's wishy washy at all. I think it shows that you're bumping into a dynamic, unknown, complex set of experiences and doing your honest best to apprise them.

I don't mean to sound as if I've "graduated" beyond these experiences to some level of proficient, fearless interaction… I simply have not. I guess I have some measure of peace that I didn't a decade or so ago. I think these experiences, and all the ancillary stressors that seem to come with the territory, take an enormous toll.

Anyway, just wanted to let you know that I very much enjoyed your email.

Merry Christmas,

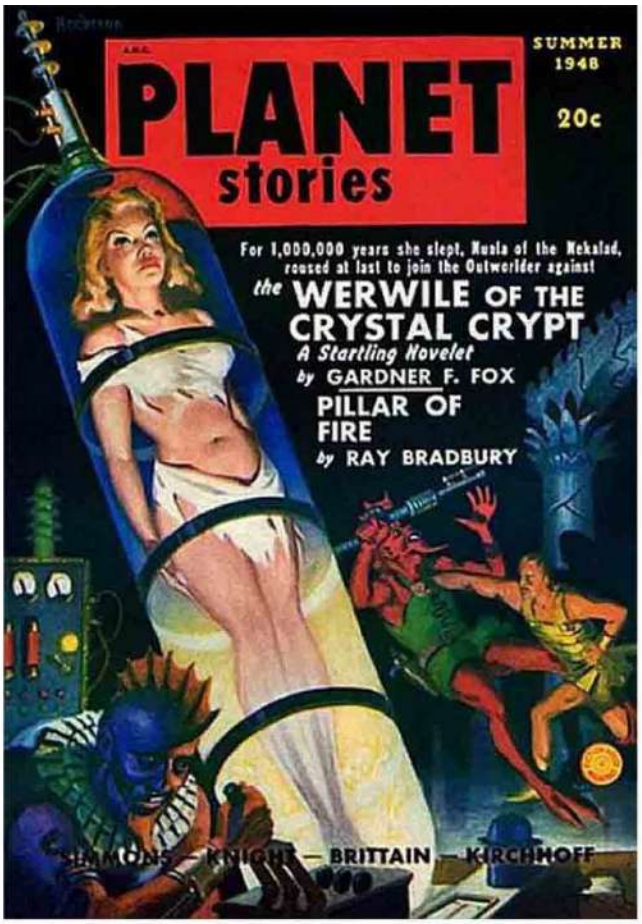
Dennis

Mike: I just re-read our correspondence, and I might use some of the text in a blog post. I thought the ideas and anxieties we articulated were really clear.

Please note: the correspondence above has been edited for clarity—just a little.

Tube girls

Saturday, March 31, 2012


SUMMER
1948
PLANET
stories
20c
For 1,000,000 years she slept, Nuala of the Nekalad, roused at last to join the Outworlder against
the WERWILE OF THE CRYSTAL CRYPT
A Startling Novelet
by GARDNER F. FOX
PILLAR OF FIRE
by RAY BRADBURY
SIMMONS — KNIGHT — BRITTAIN — KIRCHHOFF

science fiction art from a bygone era

I've started yet another blog, titled *Sci-Fi Women in Tubes*. This new site features only images of curvy women encased in glass tubes, and there are a lot of 'em. These wonderful images emerged from the Golden Age of the pulp magazine illustration.

This was a favorite theme of the late Mac Tonnies, and he'd post these on his blog. He seemed absolutely delighted that such a pattern ever existed, and now I've taken up the torch!

Text added Nov. 2018:

This tube girl site began with just a handful of images, there are now over

100.

Bright orb and a hooting owl under the stars

Monday, March 7, 2011

Something highly unusual happened four nights ago with my pal Natascha in a very isolated part of the Utah desert. We'd spent the previous week at the International UFO Congress near Phoenix, and were taking the scenic route through the desert back to my home in Idaho. Our day had been spent driving and hiking, and instead of getting a hotel room, we opted to car-camp. We found a beautiful spot along the Burr Trail road about eight miles east of the tiny town of Boulder, Utah. We parked in a cluster of juniper bushes, about 500 feet from the asphalt road. It was just a bit after sunset when we laid out our sleeping bags in the sand.

Natascha had recently arrived from Germany, and was still jet-lagged so she couldn't sleep. I'd been driving all day, and needed the rest. At some point in the night, she woke me up and said, "Mike, I can't sleep, I need to do something."

I said, "I'm sorry, I need to sleep. Maybe take a walk. It's a beautiful night."

The scene was perfectly lovely. It was cold, calm and very quiet, with an ocean of stars above us. She walked off, and I simply laid in my warm sleeping bag near the car. I was now alone, drifting in and out of sleep. At the same time, I was listening to the loud hooting of a great horned owl somewhere in the bushes near my head. It sounded so close that I couldn't understand why I didn't see it. This moment was absolutely magical—I loved it.

While I was listening to the owl, Natascha had her own experience. Here's her (slightly edited) description of what happened on that lonely road:

> It felt good to walk. I didn't use my headlamp, my eyes adapted to the darkness, and the light from the stars was enough. I enjoyed walking in the stillness, there was a dark beauty to my surroundings. But there was more, I could sense something, almost like a buzz in the air, like the air wasn't empty, there was some sparkling. It felt like I could sense energy. I have this feeling once in awhile, but here in the darkness and this place of pure nature it felt like I had a heightened ability to "see" more than we usually do. My sensations were enhanced.
>
> I was thinking about this heightened sensation, when I saw something very unusual.

> About 150 feet away, very close to the ground on the right side of the road was a bright light. It was round like an orb, and about two feet in diameter. It was so bright that my first thought was that there is somebody with a very strong flashlight. It didn't make sense, then it flashed, like it exploded, and then it was gone.
>
> My mind went crazy—I started to panic. I turned and ran back to Mike. I kept looking over my shoulder because it felt like I was being followed.

Natasha woke me and said, “Mike, we gotta leave!” I could tell she was frightened. She blurted out what had just happened, and then I was scared too. We threw everything in the car and left.

It was about four in the morning when we started driving, and she was very animated as she described watching the orb of light gliding smoothly over the sagebrush, and her shock when it exploded in a bright flash.

Later at my house we studied satellite images, and she saw the orb less than a quarter of a mile away from our sleeping spot—yet she never heard the owl. This surprised me, because the hooting was loud enough that the sound should have carried in the still desert night.

Something funny occurred while typing up this post. I was writing about what happened to Natascha, and realized it was a bit presumptuous for me to describe her direct experiences. At that *exact* moment, I received a detailed email where she recounted her memories! She sent it from a coffee shop in the Charles Du Gaulle Airport during a layover on her trip home from Idaho to Germany. This is the quoted text above.

Text added March 13, 2013:

This experience, with an owl and UFO, shows up alongside two other odd events that all line up on a map. These three accounts all play an important role in a life changing story, it’s told later in a chapter titled, *My confirmation event.*

We have blinders on

Sunday, June 17, 2012

Jack Brewer from the website *UFO Trial* is working on a post focusing on potential solutions and constructive directions for ufology. He sent me an email asking for a quote, and this request collided with some strong coffee.

Here's what I sent him:

> This subject is so elusive that it's nearly impossible to formalize it like other sciences. You can't force the round peg of UFOs into the square hole of your own design. I am not a scientist, I'm ever the creative type, and I'm content ignoring anything that resembles a formalized process.
>
> There are aspects of this phenomenon that challenge everything, including my definition of reality. There are little strings all tangled up that seem to go everywhere. Life, death, expanded conciseness, mind-control, emerging mythology, channeling, mysticism, synchronicity, psychic weirdness and outright magic are all connected. Everything is on the table.
>
> You start out questioning, "What is happening?" and you very quickly need to ask, "What is God?"
>
> Too many researchers have locked themselves into confined little boxes. When asked about some of the outlying strangeness, I've heard too many people say, "Well that's just ridiculous!" But when I dig into that preconceived ridiculous stuff, I find there's really something going on there. It's complicated and slippery—but *something* is going on.
>
> We are all human, and we are trying to peer into something from beyond our realm. True understanding might be impossible. We need to pull off our blinders, and this ain't easy. Or, at least we need to admit that we have these blinders—all of us.
>
> I guess my point is that we need to admit that our own preconceived baggage is hindering the process of truly digging deeply into the subject. This includes me too—I have my own crappy flaws that make me just as guilty as anyone else. Everyone is gonna have different conclusions, that's just what we get. But I really believe that everyone, no matter how nutty (or how conservative) is bringing important puzzle pieces to the table.

Text added in 2018:

This comment was part of a long post on Jack Brewer's site, titled: *Open Mic Night.* Other researchers and experiencers also wrote short essays for that post.

I've read some remarkable articles on his site where he investigates the complex deception within some UFO cases. Jack wrote this on his blog profile: "I encourage critical thinking and healthy skepticism balanced with keeping an open mind."

He published a well-received book in 2015, titled: *The Greys Have Been Framed: Exploitation in the UFO Community*.

We were both featured in Robbie Graham's important book from 2017: *UFOs: Reframing the Debate*, confronting this messy subject from completely differing viewpoints. I respect a lot of his research, but some of what he says makes me crazy—I suspect he says the same thing of me.

Something up there responds

Thursday, June 28, 2012

Just a few nights ago I went camping in the Tetons with my friend Erika. It was a beautiful clear night, and we slept out under the stars. We were at about 9,500 feet above sea level, and the high elevation made for some amazing sky watching.

We were in our sleeping bags looking up at the stars, and we saw a handful of satellites cruising along at a steady speed across the sky. We got to see a few impressively bright shooting stars too.

As I was close to drifting off, we saw one odd little dot in the sky. It seemed like nothing more than the satellites we'd been watching, yet we both pointed it out as something different.

As a sort of joke (with a new-age schmaltzy tone) I spoke to the little dot in the sky: "I love you!"

At that point, it sort of pulsed a little bit brighter.

We both saw it, and I did it again, this time with an even more cloying voice. I said: *"I love you my little UFO!"*

And just like before, there was a bright pulse of light, it was an *instantaneous response*.

It happened six times! I would say "I love you" to the little dot, and each time it would pulse brighter. One of the glowing responses was impressively bright. I asked Erika about it the next day, sort of like, "Did that really happen?"

She confirmed that yes indeed, it happened. She said one bright pulse was really weird, and she'd never seen anything like that in her life. She described it like a camera flash that momentarily burned its image in your eye. I agreed.

And I really said, "I love you my little UFO!" I said it in a childish sing-song voice, just like the tag line from the 'My Little Pony' commercials that I'd worked on back in my days in advertising.

Before posting this, I called Kim Carlsberg who runs a service called *Sedona UFO Sky Tours*, where she takes clients out skywatching with military grade night-vision goggles. I explained what had happened in the sky while camping, and she replied, "This happens ALL THE TIME. We see

these lights pulse in response to lasers and also when we ask them to… We are communicating."

I said, "Wait, what do you mean communicating?"

She said, "They'll respond directly to our requests, we'll ask them to light up, and they do. We are communicating."

That was pretty much what happened with Erika and I under the stars.

A few months ago, I saw a funny online video of a sky watch. It showed night vision footage of a dot of bright light moving across the sky, and a group of people all shouted, "I love you!" and it got brighter!

So when I said, "I love you my little UFO", I was mimicking the people in that video. I'm quick to poke fun at the new-age crowd, but this time the joke was on me. That video is *very* accurate to what Erika and I had experienced the other night!

Note: The video referenced above is no longer available online.

Do you feel a sense of mission?

Wednesday, May 2, 2012

I've been searching out questionnaires used by UFO abduction researchers, and I'm currently in the midst of trying to collect and compare these documents.

Here's a short list of some of the researchers who've put these questionnaires on their sites: Brad Steiger, Barbara Lamb, Kathleen Marden, David Jacobs, Mary Rodwell, MUFON, ICAR (Joe Montaldo's organization), and some outfit I've never heard of called AAER. These are all fascinating.

I've filled out a few of these, more out of curiosity than to receive any sort of potential validation of what might have happened in my life. There were some questions I'd expected, like: "Have you ever seen a UFO?"

As you go down the list, there are some exceptionally curious questions I wouldn't expect, like: "Do you have a fear of closet doors?" I'll answer yes to a few of 'em (I have seen a UFO), and I'll answer no to most of 'em (I have no fear of closet doors).

There's one question that gets asked in all of these questionnaires: "Do you feel a sense of mission?" And my reply to that one is screaming a loud emphatic **YES!!!**

I am not exaggerating, my answer needs to be in bold letters with lots of exclamation marks. For reasons I don't understand, this feels like a burning urgency deep in my soul, and I don't know why.

Mission Statement

Sometime in 2011

> This blog is dedicated to the deeply personal side of an elusive *something*. There is a phenomena at play in our world, and it seems to present itself as unknowable. Something is happening, and I feel strongly that it is very real. Honesty, an open mind and an open heart are all required to better understand what is happening.
>
> —Mike Clelland, 2011

There's a lot of information out there, especially on the web, and I'm consistently disappointed at how almost all of it is cold and dispassionate. Some reports read like the paperwork you'd send into your insurance company after denting your fender. I loathe the unemotional way some of this stuff gets presented; too many researchers are ignoring the most intriguing aspect of what is unfolding—*the human experience*.

There are fragile human beings interacting with a phenomenon that is confusing, challenging, mystifying, cunning, seductive, deceptive, terrifying and (potentially) consciousness expanding.

The UFO mythos is intertwined with a greater set of phenomena, and these outlying data points fascinate me. I want to better understand high-strangeness, psychic insights, channeling, unreported patterns, alien abduction, the contact experience, MILABs, subtle realms of consciousness and synchronicity.

Funny synchronicity

Monday, June 13, 2011

Here's a funny exchange via Facebook between myself and author and researcher Christopher Knowles from just a few weeks ago. On May 31, he'd found a book we'd talked about during our recent interview.

The new-age vibe of this book is way over the top, and I can be pretty judgmental about this kind of thing. But I was totally disarmed by the voice of the author—it's so folksy, that it really allowed me a "way into" her far out story.

Lemme add that Chris and I have gone back and forth on the perceived shallowness of the new age. Here's an excerpt from our Facebook chat-box dialog:

> **Chris:** I had to take my son somewhere today. So since I had to go way out of my way I stopped at the used book store. And what's waiting there for me? An unread copy of *UFOs and the Psychic Factor* by Ida Kannenberg...
>
> **Mike:** Get ready, this book is WONDERFUL! That sweet old grandmother had such a delightful take on this subject!
>
> **Chris:** What are the odds?
>
> (a little while later)
>
> **Chris:** OK, so I pick up this book, thinking "what's this all about, what's it got to tell me?" and open the book up at random as I do with new non-fiction books. I open the book up to page 103 and my eyes focus on the second paragraph...

Now check out the funny part—here's the first thing he reads in the book:

> *An example of these mysteries may be that we want him to read a certain type of book. We manipulate his path so that he stumbles over certain books, which he feels "inspired" to read.* [4]

I sent Chris a reply: "Ha-Ha! Seems 'they' manipulated your path! I love this kind of stuff. Really and truly, it just slays me."

~ ~ ~

Ida Kannenberg died on May 17 2010, she was 95 years old.

Of all the authors that have inspired me, Ida was the one who I went back to over and over as a way to hold onto some sort of framework for this phenomenon. She told of life events that included UFO contact, visitations from human entities, telepathic messages and channeling.

She lobbied that much of what might be perceived as literal, was in fact metaphoric and mythic. Some UFO events might never have happened—instead, they could have been staged for symbolic effect.

She wrote (or channeled) about the profound difference between spirit and the soul, something that went way beyond what we might assume a UFO contactee would try to tackle. She was funny and sassy, making her books perfectly delightful.

Another 12345 synchronicity

Monday, June 13, 2011

the frozen timecount on my DVD player

Here's a heavy handed example of the synchro-weirdness that overwhelms me. I get 123 a lot and 1234 occasionally, but when 12345 shows up I *really* pay attention! The photo above shows my DVD player with the frozen time count of 1:23:45. I should be used to this stuff by now, but something about this experience struck me as very strange.

I just watched a rented DVD of the movie *Catfish*. It's a documentary about an artist who falls for a pretty girl he met on Facebook named Megan. There's a lot to the story, but it ends up that the girl doesn't exist. It was a fake identity created by a lonely woman who later becomes friends with the artist.

The film is quite touching, yet I suspect it's not an actual documentary. The narrative could have been staged and scripted. I didn't think about any of this while watching the film; I was totally caught up in the story, but I thought about it afterwards. If it was fake, the filmmakers managed to created something wonderful.

The film ends with a series of moody vignettes, each with a title card over the scene and a short summation of the characters in the story. One segment has a loving close-up of Megan, and the superimposed text states she never existed. Right at that moment, my DVD player seized up on the frozen image of Megan's face. The girl with the fake Facebook account, filled my TV

screen—and the timecount read 1:23:45.

I backed it up and tried again, and the DVD froze up at the same count, again on her face. I did it multiple times, and each time it got stuck at exactly 1:23:45. I was mystified, and actually videotaped it because I couldn't believe this was happening.

Here's where it gets really strange—I'm a Facebook friend with a mysterious young woman also named Megan. I've been worried about her because she's been hinting about certain memories and experiences in her life, and what she's described has all the hallmarks of UFO abduction. I'll add that she's very smart, and hasn't been satisfied with the simplistic ideas about alien contact that play out in pop culture.

This is a powerful synchronicity. The fake character in the movie has the *same name* as my mysterious friend, and this is just one small part! There's even more weirdness.

As the film was winding down, the credits were beginning to roll and I wanted to see if Megan was logged on to Facebook. We often talk in the chat box at night, so I grabbed my laptop and opened Facebook. I was just about to type 'hello' to someone with probable UFO contact experiences—when the DVD player froze at 1:23:45.

I wrote an email to Anya Briggs that night and explained what had happened, essentially the text above. Here's her reply.

> **On May 31, 2011, at 1:23 AM, Anya Briggs replies:**
> !!!! That is TRIPPY. Wowsers. I don't know what to make of it but my guides are saying parallel universes and timelines play a role in this! Jesus!

Please note that Anya replied at 1:23 AM. Also, I'm quite confident my friend Megan is a real person.

Birthday numbers

Saturday, March 27, 2010

My Dad and I share the same birthday, August 22. Last year I took him to his doctor for a checkup, and I watched him fill out a form in the waiting room. He wrote slowly in strong capital letters, and I was surprised when he filled in his date of birth. I saw something for the very first time. Despite nearly a half century to figure it out, neither of us noticed the tidy resemblance until that moment—*it was all the same numbers*.

Dad's: 8 / 22 / 1926
Mine: 8 / 22 / 1962

We had another curious number synch with our birthdays. It was the reversal of our ages. These were our ages (below) when we finally noticed the similarity of the birthday numbers!

Dad was 84 and I was 48.

Trust your inner storyteller

Saturday, April 11, 2015

a great white heron in the living room

Leigh J McCloskey is an actor, painter and author. Ten years ago, he entered his living room to find a great white heron standing in the center of a red Persian rug. It was looking directly at him.

His story is told in a short essay titled *A Most Remarkable Visitation.* It's posted on Whitley Strieber's Unknown Country site, linked here.

This large bird remained in his home for some time, and he even got a photo. He had a communication with his guest, and at one point he spontaneously blurted out "Thoth!" This is the ancient Egyptian ibis headed god, and revealer of alchemical and Hermetic wisdom.

Hearing this exclamation, the great white heron clucked loudly. McCloskey thought he was going to faint and asked the bird, "Is this where someone appears in a puff of smoke?"

McCloskey writes:

> Then I heard him speak inwardly in a very powerful masculine voice, exhorting me, "Absolutely not. You have the nature of consciousness all wrong. It has nothing to do with

> the human form and everything to do with the incipient pattern of intelligence which is within everything."
>
> …He continued. "You know I am bird. You see that I am a symbol, but what you fail to realize yet is that I am consciousness that lives in more than one world at a time. I ascend and return and the reason I don't speak to you with words is I teach you to trust your inner storyteller."

This account, especially the quoted text above, really hit home for me. This was exactly the meaning that's been arising from all the work on my owl book. Rather than any conclusion, I have instead become disciple of the story. I need to trust my "inner story teller." It's the first-person account that holds all the power, and these stories have the ability to transport me to a place of deeper knowing.

View Leigh J McCloskey's remarkable art here.

Is the phenomenon being self-generated?

Sunday, April 10, 2011

I read a single sentence that touched a nerve in me from Dan Mitchell on his contentious site, *Luminosity*. He wrote: “This again leaves little doubt that at least in my own case, the phenomenon is being self-generated.”

I’ve had this very same concept rolling around in my head over the last few days. I feel like the phenomenon has been manifesting in a way to match my deeply personal set of, dare I say, needs. The direct experience can be mystifying, and can stir up a lot of self-doubt.

It feels like there’s a deceptive and elusive mystery unfolding before me, and there’s something about it that I truly *like* as it urges me further down the path. It’s an irresistible puzzle that engages me in a way that exactly matches my own personality.

What is happening? Are there all-knowing beings out there in a hidden realm, reading my mind and deciphering all its subtleties? Are they tailoring my experiences to dovetail precisely with what would be most engaging to me, and me alone? As strange as it sounds, this is how it feels.

Or could it be that there’s a part of me, or some higher self (or future self, or astral self, or my soul-self) that’s reaching outward, and meeting some mysterious energy halfway? Maybe the result is a merging of intentions that’s creating these highly tailored experiences.

Maybe there’s no outside source, and it’s all self-generated. This concept is worth pondering; it seems possible, but doesn’t feel quite right. I get the strong impression that there’s something very mysterious out there, and it’s influencing my life.

I’m a cartoonist with a playful sense of the absurd. My drawings (and personality) seem to revel in a sort of warm hearted, mischievous outlook. I think I’m self-aware enough to see this statement as accurate. And, curiously enough, my experiences seem to manifest with “plot elements” that match my personality quirks.

A mystery is being laid out before me, seductively urging me to follow. And in a very real sense, it’s my mystery, and my path alone.

Listening to wolves

Monday, December 14, 2009

I deeply love sleeping outside under the stars. I've just returned from a two week winter camping trip in the mountains outside Yellowstone in Wyoming.

On a calm night with an almost full moon, I chose to sleep outside my tent. I went out into the middle of a lovely meadow, and stomped out a flat spot with my skis. This would be my bed.

It was probably 20 below zero Fahrenheit when I zipped up my enormous winter sleeping bag. I was warm and content under the magical clear sky.

I listened to wolves howling all night long—and they were *close*. It was beautiful.

The next day, I skied around the edges of the meadow and found a lot of wolf tracks. It was either one wolf, or several—I have no idea, but some of the tracks were just a few dozen yards from where I'd slept under the big, cold deep blue sky.

Some short posts

What follows are a few examples of very short posts. I've used some of these during presentations because they are quick and handy for separating the longer stories. I'll use the clicker to pop an image on the big screen, the audience laughs (usually) and I move onto the next account. Sometimes I'm approached after the talk by a stern faced attendee, and they'll inform me these were not valid research. I then explain, "I included them because I think they are funny."

What can it mean?

Saturday, August 24, 2013

Betty and Barney Rubble

Betty and Barney Hill

The Flintstones premiered September 30 1960. Betty and Barney Hill were abducted by aliens on September 20 1961.

Also worth noting:

Betty and Barney

is an anagram of

Nabbed any? Try ET!

Synonym?

Saturday, January 30, 2016

OWLET is in the dictionary, it means a young or small owl.
The word OWLET is also *OWL ET*.

G+UFO

Tuesday, May 22, 2018

The Italian word for owl is *gufo*. This can be read as: “Gee, UFO!”

Confirmation bias from my phone

Tuesday November 6, 2018

Sometimes I speak into my phone using the thing that changes my speech to text—and it usually works pretty well. I spoke the word OWL and it typed it out as HOW ODD. Not sure if that’s a mistake.

Writing out UFO when I want to say OWL

Wednesday, October 24, 2018

I'll want to write the word *OWL*, but write *UFO* instead. And I'll make the same mistake the other way around too, mixing up UFO for OWL. This has happened hundreds of time in the last decade. Both are three letter words, and both are at the core of my obsessive research.

In my work I've argued that these two "flying objects" are connected to the point where they are blurring together, so I guess this makes sense.

My responsibility

Saturday, February 14, 2015

If you google the words UFO and owl, my name comes up on the top of that list, then it repeats for the next dozen or so listings. So if anyone anywhere in the world searches for info concerning their own unusual experiences with UFOs and owls—they're gonna find me.

Because of this, a lot of amazing owl stories are arriving in my email inbox—at present, it's about one a day. I've made a real effort to respond to every person, but sometimes it can be hard to keep up. From what I sense, these are stories from very sincere people who are struggling with their experiences. And before I can reply in any meaningful way, more new owl stories arrive.

A lot of these emails will begin with a line like this, "I've never told anyone about these experiences, but…"

Or, they'll say that my work has triggered something in them. They'll tell me, "I just watched your talk on YouTube, and I simply HAD to contact you."

I'm also getting an additional level of synchronistic weirdness. People will describe seeing an owl as they are reading my long format essay (Owls and the UFO Abductee), or while watching one of my online presentations. Or, it might come across like this, "I was trying to decide whether or not I should contact you, when I suddenly saw an owl land on a branch right outside my window."

Most of these stories are amazing. For me, they've confirmed that there is something very real happening. What it might be, I don't know, but it's truly happening.

I am working on a book about owls and UFOs, and it would be impossible to include all the stories I've amassed. But what's happened is that I'm now at the point where I can *feel* the patterns that have emerged, and I can address this weird phenomenon in a way I never could have just a few years ago. I can now talk about (or write about) what is at play with an out-and-out certainty. I'm convinced that owls are playing a role in the mystery—yet the source remains unknown.

Please know, I deeply appreciate that so many people are reaching out to me. I take this responsibility very seriously.

If anyone reading this has sent me an email, I wholeheartedly thank you. If you've sent me a letter and I haven't replied, I apologize. And, if you've had an odd experience involving owls, I would still love to hear your story.

14

THE STRUGGLE

The thing you are most afraid to write.
Write that.

— Nayyirah Waheed

Confirmation anxiety

November 1, 2011

Ten years ago, I had an experience that was tremendously bizarre. This essay is a personal examination of a memory and its implications. This was difficult to write, but it was also cathartic. I've been hesitant to share this story because of the extremely personal nature of what happened. All I can say, is this experience seems truly mysterious. My hope is other people might find my testament helpful in trying to make sense of their own memories.

Here's the story, as best as I can recall.

It was late at night during the winter of 2001, probably late January or early February. Kelly (a pseudonym) and I had recently started dating, and at that point we were living together in my small cabin in rural Idaho. I teach backcountry ski trips in the Northern Rockies, and I'd just come home from a winter camping course. This was the first night back in my bed after ten days in the mountains.

I was tired after all that time camping in cold weather, but I was also excited to see Kelly again. We went to bed together, and snuggled under the big down comforter in my drafty cabin. My bed was just a mattress on the floor up in a loft with a low ceiling.

Sometime during the middle of the night, we *both* woke up with an abrupt jolt—we were suddenly wide awake and having sex. This wasn't anything sleepy or slow, we were really going at it. It was terribly strange for me, but I think it was even more jarring for Kelly.

We both blurted out, "What just happened?"

I remember my immediate reaction, it was just a flash in my mind: *they're here*. At the time I don't think I even knew what that meant, but that was clearly the thought.

The covers were off of us, and it was dark in the room. This was odd because we would never make love in total darkness, and would always have a light on in the room. And it was mid-winter in my drafty cabin, so sleeping (or waking up) with the covers off was unusual because the house could get quite cold.

I remember turning the light on at some point, but I don't remember how it

ended. I'm not sure, but I think we "finished" what we were doing. At the time we were both concerned about pregnancy, and were always careful, so I can only assume we were careful that night too.

Here's one more odd detail, and it's difficult to articulate. Before we both woke up, I had a foggy point-of-view memory of rolling over towards Kelly, and getting right on top of her. It's vague and dreamlike, but at the same time feels awkward and decidedly unromantic. The room was completely dark, but I still have a foggy visual of moving toward her, and this memory is distorted in a way that seems odd.

There's an other-worldly impression surrounding this short fragment of a memory, and it's important that I try to describe this feeling. This eerie sensation is hard to explain in words, but it wasn't a dream—it felt distinctly different. It was weirdly quiet, with a palpable warping in a way that seems entirely different from a normal state of mind.

This strange dream-like quality matches the sensations I felt in two other events. The first was in 1993, when I saw five skinny gray aliens out my window at night. The second was during the summer of 2008, and it was part of a funny dream involving a UFO in my brother's garage. Both of these experiences are addressed in this book, along with a few more that happened after writing this essay.

I don't remember anything we might have said the next morning, but at one point, perhaps a month after the event, Kelly said: "Wasn't that weird, that thing that happened when we both woke up?"

As I recall, I didn't respond in any meaningful way, and nothing more was said. Except for that brief exchange, Kelly and I *never* talked about this event again. That changed when we talked on the phone six years later.

I called her in October of 2007 to ask about that night, and the events leading up to that phone call are interesting. At the time I was visiting New York, and was staying with my old college friend Peter and his wife Anne.

I was in the city to see Budd Hopkins as part of a documentary project. But more than that, I was hoping he could help me make sense of my odd memories. Earlier in my trip I'd spent several hours with Budd at his home in Manhattan, and I liked him enormously. He listened patiently as I spoke, and seemed genuinely interested in my experiences. Most of our conversations were videotaped.

During this same trip to the east coast I spent time with Dr. David Jacobs,

a UFO abduction researcher and history professor living in Philadelphia. During our interview he offhandedly said, “If you want to know if someone has had a UFO abduction event in their life, all you need to do is ask, ‘*What’s the strangest thing that’s ever happened to you?*’ and with that one question, you’ll know if they’ve ever been abducted.”

That seemed as good a way as any to try and get some insights into the phenomenon. I thought to myself, what if I asked Kelly that same question, “What’s the strangest thing that’s ever happened to you.” I had this funny flash, and instantly knew what her answer would be—our experience of waking up simultaneously.

I hadn’t really thought about it since the event itself in 2001.

I’ve been open with Peter about my UFO experiences, sharing all of it, no matter how bizarre. I told him the details of that night, about Kelly and I waking up in the act of sex, and we were both struck by the utter strangeness of that story. Somehow, until this conversation, I’d managed to dismiss it and its very weird implications. It struck me as odd that I could completely shut out the memory of this event.

I don’t remember exactly what I said to Peter, but when I articulated the part where we both woke up, it went like this: “Well, we were doing something that you can only get into *consciously*, but we got there *unconsciously*, and to suddenly be thrust into consciousness was really weird and jarring.”

Peter was mystified, and so was I.

Right then, Peter had to leave the house and pick up his daughter from preschool. Now alone in the apartment, I immediately called Kelly on my cell phone and left her a message. We’d broken up a few years before, but remained good friends. She called me back within a few minutes.

I got right into it and asked what she remembered about that night. She hemmed and hawed, said it was a long time ago, and that she couldn’t remember much. She sounded annoyed, and it was obvious she didn’t want to talk about it. I needed to hear her side of the story, and urged her to tell me what she remembered. Eventually she cautiously said that we woke up at the same time, and it was startling.

I asked her to define what she meant by “startling.”

She got defensive, snapping that it was just a word. I could hear anger in her voice, but I kept pressing her. I had a pen in my hand ready to write down

her reply.

Finally, she said: “Well, we were doing something that you can only get into *consciously*, but we got there *unconsciously*, and to suddenly be thrust into consciousness was really weird and jarring.”

It felt like she was repeating my memory—word for word.

This was *exactly* how it felt for me too. She articulated my experience so clearly that it was a grave confirmation to my own fears. It was a hard slap in the face.

While writing this essay, I used the exact same words for each of our statements, but I really don’t know how it actually played out. All I can say is that what we both said was close enough that it scared me.

The next morning, I rode the subway into Manhattan to meet with Budd. The moment I entered his home, I sat him down on the couch and unloaded my weird story. I told him I’d called Kelly the prior afternoon, and shared that she remembered the experience exactly as I had—maybe too exactly, and it scared me.

He listened patiently, and at the end I asked, “Have you ever heard of anything like this in your work?”

He replied without words. I watched his expression, he rolled his eyes and gave me this almost comical look of exasperation. He’d obviously heard it before.

He told me about working with a married couple with abduction experiences. They’d had a lot of “text book” stories, and were eager for any kind of answers. At the end of a long session, as an aside to her husband, the wife added, “Do you remember that night we both woke up in the act of sex? Wasn’t that weird?”

My heart sank. Hearing Budd tell that story was terribly distressing, and I could no longer deny the reality of my experiences.

Later that same morning we did a hypnosis session, though I’m not sure if I was truly “under” or not. I was very relaxed and spoke incredibly slowly, but there wasn’t much new information beyond what I had remembered consciously. We tried to look into several events, and I was calm enough that I didn’t add any of my nervous doubts while answering his questions.

Near the end of the session, he asked about the experience of waking up with Kelly. I said that at the moment we woke up I felt like we were being watched, like this was somehow orchestrated. It was vague, but that’s how it

felt. This was something I actually remembered consciously, but was too embarrassed to articulate.

As I reflect on that last statement, it accurately describes the impression I got, but it's almost impossible believe—the ramifications are too unnerving. Hypnosis is limiting, and I want to be careful how much I trust from these fleeting recollections.

Yet the feeling of being watched was palpable, and I'd remembered this before the hypnosis session. My little loft is claustrophobic and dark, and I remember trying to look around. I'll also add that a gut feeling emerged, "*It's them*."

Below is a transcript of the videotaped hypnosis session from that morning. I was lying on his bed, and he was in a chair next to me. Near the end of the Budd asked me if there was anything else we should look into while I was still in a relaxed state.

Budd: Anything that pops up I want you to tell me.

Mike: I—uhhm—I talked about the incident with Kelly, in my bed in Idaho.

Budd: Yes.

Mike: And—and—It was very dark in the room, and I get the impression, that I am moving towards her before the event begins.

Budd: When you say moving towards her, do you mean standing, or sitting.

Mike: No, I'm in the bed with her—it's very—uhhm, awkward—and I recognize that she's more surprised than I am—when she comes to. And at the time, I remember having the impression that someone was watching—and—the way my loft is set up—the way my house is set up, my impression is that someone is watching through the roof, like they weren't necessarily in the room.

Budd: Yes, through the roof, there's no sky light or anything, is that

right?

Mike: Yes, that's correct.

Budd: Okay.

Mike: And there was a very palpable feeling that someone was watching.

Budd: Now how did that make you feel? Did that bother you, or was that embarrassing, or did it add a sort of eroticism to it? What did that do to the experience?

Mike: Well, it certainly wasn't erotic.

Budd: No, it was not erotic, okay. Was it embarrassing?

Mike: No, it was more—weird. It felt like it was intense emotional love between Kelly and I, but at the same time there was—a very quick need to reject those thoughts that someone was watching.

Budd: To reject that idea?

Mike: Yeah, avoid it—deny it.

Budd: Now this is again, fantasizing a bit, inventing, but I'm going to ask you a question, and answer just very quickly—just off the top of your head, how would you describe whoever was watching.

Mike: Uhhmmm…

Budd: Your intuitive feeling.

Mike: My intuitive feeling it that it was little gray aliens—but—I don't have anything to back that up with.

I remember my thoughts about this moment during the session. I was very familiar with Budd's work, and this was a regression to find any clues about UFO contact, so answering 'little gray aliens' is too convenient. I didn't trust this answer, even as I spoke it.

Budd: Yes, but that was just your feeling.

Mike: And uhhm—and also very ghost-like.

Budd: Now this is a rather personal question, and you don't have to answer this, but do you feel that either of you climaxed in this experience or not?

Mike: Uhhmmm—I can't remember that—and I think that we were so preoccupied with not getting pregnant that I think we would have been careful—but I can't answer that.

Budd: Well obviously—if there had been a climax there probably would have been [unintelligible] shall we say afterword. do you remember saying anything like that.

I've listened to this point in the audio very closely many times, and I'm pretty sure the unintelligible word is *semen*. This shows up *exactly* at 12:34 on the time count.

Mike: I don't remember.

Budd: So when you came into your conscious state simultaneously, you were surprised at the time, is that correct?

Mike: It seemed very odd, it seemed like I eased out of my—from my —into my consciousness. And Kelly snapped into consciousness.

Budd: Do you think that from observing her that she was going through the same thing?

Mike: The same surprise?

Budd: Yeah, the same surprise.

Mike: She snapped into consciousness quicker.

Budd: You said she referred to it as “startling” is that right?

Mike: Yeah.

Budd: Anything else about this?

Mike: Uhhm… No.

Shortly after this, Budd led me out of the hypnotic state. We sat and spoke for awhile, and he explained what he’d tried to do during the session. He was very supportive and kind, and that meant a lot to me.

I was sitting up on his bed, and he told me something I’ve heard before. He spoke thoughtfully, “Don’t take this the wrong way, but there’s something about you that seems frightened or scared.” I don’t hear this often, but other people have told me the same thing.

I told Budd it was extremely distressing to hear Kelly describe her memories of that night in 2001. Her recollections matched mine too exactly that I knew it wasn’t just me, and I wasn’t lying to myself. This stuff was suddenly very real, and it freaked me out.

Budd listened, then told me what I was feeling was referred to as *confirmation anxiety.* This is a term used by him and other researchers when an odd event gets confirmed by someone else, and the person can no longer deny the experience. Or the event might have happened without another witness, but the experience is self-evident in a way that it’s now impossible to ignore as a reality.

I shared my story with David Jacobs during a phone call. I asked if he’d ever heard anything like this in his research, and his response was cautious in a way that was sort of funny. He said he didn’t want to say anything that might be leading, and I told him I’ve read a lot about the phenomenon, so I was pretty well contaminated with information. With that, he reluctantly said

he'd never heard exactly the story I'd just told him, but he'd heard many very similar stories that could be interpreted as closely matching what I'd experienced.

I also shared this story with UFO abduction researcher Joe Montaldo during a personal phone call. He listened patiently, and at the end I asked him if he'd ever heard anything that might match this kind of experience.

He replied, "Only about a thousand times."

I heard a similar experience from a well known abductee I met at the Laughlin UFO conference. She was in a closed door support meeting for experiencers when I spoke about simultaneously waking up with Kelly. I talked about my distress surrounding this memory. Later, this woman took me aside and told me her experience.

She said that years earlier, she and her boyfriend were alone together in a forest. They were lying in the grass and things began to get "amorous." Then they were suddenly asleep—it happened simultaneously to both of them. It was very strange, and looking back she suspects it might have been an abduction event.

Her story doesn't quite match mine, but is worth noting.

In the fall of 2008 I met David Biedny at a UFO conference in New Jersey. At the time he was one of the hosts of the online radio show titled *The Paracast*, and I'll add that I have a lot of respect for his level-headed approach toward the paranormal topics on his show, so it was nice to talk with him. I shared some of my stories, including the experience of waking up simultaneously with Kelly, and seemed as perplexed as I was. He asked if I'd be open to being a guest on his show, and I didn't think it was a good idea, but he gently persuaded me and eventually I said yes.

This came at a turbulent time in my life. It was only a year earlier that I'd truly started looking into my own odd life experiences, before that point I'd ignored my memories and their implications. During these initial years of exploration, I was trying to make sense of a frantic tidal wave of emotions. I was obsessive and anxious, and at the same time I was weirdly gushing about my memories. I feel more secure now, but back then I was a mess.

I was on the *Paracast* twice—first in November of 2008, and again in March of 2009. This was at the height of that needy chapter of my life. During my second appearance I shared the story about waking up with Kelly, and my hypnosis with Budd. It was a little awkward, but I tried to speak as

plainly as I could. At the end David thanked me, stating it was one of the most enjoyable shows he'd ever recorded.

After my appearance, two online forums relating to that show were flooded with reactions; many were quite supportive, but there were also a lot of negative comments. I got called a liar, an ego-maniac, an attention seeker, a fraud, a name-dropper, delusional and on and on and on. These critical comments were focused almost entirely on the story about waking up with Kelly, and the venom this unleashed was shocking.

Some people pointed out that there was a recognized sleep disorder, similar to sleep walking, where people will act out sexual behavior while asleep, and sometimes an individual will wake up during the act of sex. Their point was only partially relevant, because they ignored the fact that both Kelly and I both woke up at the same moment.

Being on the receiving end of such caustic criticism felt awful. It was a tough way to learn a lesson. I'd stepped in to an arena of sorts, and there were plenty of people out there eager to insult and judge. So after all that, I've been a bit gun-shy to share this story again.

I was unaware of the sleep disorder mentioned by some of the commenters. I looked it up, and it's referred to as "Sleep-Sex" or "Sexsomnia". This is a behavior where one partner will initiate sex while asleep. I did a little bit of research on the subject, but haven't found any cases where both partners awoke simultaneously.

During my online searching I found the name of a doctor who was doing research into this subject. I sent him an email asking about my experience. His reply was that my experience was: "decidedly unusual." My letter from March 28, 2009 and his response are posted below, I asked:

> I have a "sleep-sex" question. I have experienced this only once, and it was quite jarring. I was living with my girlfriend at the time, and late at night, we both woke up, instantaneously in the act of sex. It was not one of us waking the other, we were BOTH actively engaged in the act, and we BOTH woke up at the very same instant.
>
> We each blurted out: "What just happened?"
>
> My question: Has this scenario ever come up in your research? Please—a reply would be helpful, we are both extremely curious.
>
> Thank you,
> Mike Clelland

I received a reply the next day. I'm including the full text of his letter below,

as well as his long list of credentials.

> 29 Mar. 2009
>
> Dear Mr. Clelland,
>
> Thank you for your interest in SFA. It is clear that unusual and at times bizarre behaviors that arise from sleep are more common in adults than previously thought. This would include sexualized behaviors that arise from sleep... now commonly referred to as "Sexsomnia" (Please refer to our publication on *Sexsomnia* authored by Schenck, Arnulf, et al.- you can pull up this reference on Google Academics). However, for bed-partners to engage in the same sleep-related behavior at the same time would be decidedly unusual.
>
> Best Regards,
> Michel A. Cramer Bornemann, MD
> Co-Director, Minnesota Regional Sleep Disorders Center
> Lead Investigator, Sleep Forensics Associates (SFA)

A note to the reader:

I made this document longer and more detailed than it needed to be. I did this on purpose for two reasons. One—I wanted it to include all the relevant details in the hopes that it might help anyone else who have experienced the same thing.

And two—I wanted it to be off-putting for any reader who would want to mock or insult what happened to me. My hope was that anyone who would want to be purposefully offensive wouldn't bother to read anything so long-winded.

Anti-psychotic medication

Saturday, September 17, 2011

I've been pretty darned open on this blog about my history of depression, and the impact it's had on my life. Earlier this week I spent an hour at a therapist's office, my second visit with her. I've been looking to find some sort of counseling as a way to better understand my recurring bouts of depression.

During my first visit a week ago, I was perfectly honest with this woman. I asked her how open minded she was, then told her about my memories and odd life events.

I did my best to explain my feelings that these experiences seemed to be intertwined with UFO related events—the implication would be ongoing alien abduction, and I was somehow involved.

A few days ago I returned for our second session, and right away I sensed her tone was different. She was very serious and cautious. Within the first minute of my sitting across from her, she asked me if I'd ever considered taking anti-psychotic medication as a way to deal with my ideas about alien abduction.

Hearing that, my heart sank. I explained I didn't feel it was necessary. On one level I understood she didn't know much about the issues within this confusing phenomenon. On another level, it felt so bleak that she would talk with me only once, and conclude I was suffering from a psychotic malady that required medication.

We sat for the remainder of the hour going round and round—her repeating my need for medication and me trying to explain myself. It was miserable and I never went back.

I've spent the last five years (if not longer) trying to make sense of my experiences, and believe me I've factored in this might be mental illness. The only conclusion I've reached is that *something* has happened. This elusive *something* seems to involve UFOs, synchronicities and a deep compulsion to know more.

Please note:

I'll probably delete this post in a few days. I know there are folks who follow this blog, and maybe my personal "gushing" might be of some value.

Text added Nov. 27, 2011

I deleted this post a few days after it was originally posted, but I'm adding it back into the blog now because I figure it'll be buried within all the other posts. If anyone reads it here, it's a real, although bleak part of my overall experience.

“That makes so much sense”

Removed from the blog around 2010

In the early years of the blog I added a short post, then removed it after a few days. One of the commenters said it was too sad, and he was right, so I trashed it but didn’t forget about it. At the time the issues were too raw, but enough time has passed that I feel I should try to retell it. Despite the dark emotions, it feels like an important moment in my own journey.

I’ve rewritten the experience for this book.

The story dealt with some grim memories from the winter of 1992. At the time I was engaged to be married, and I lived with my fiancée in a little house in the woods of Maine. I was suffering terribly from clinical depression, and she left me at a point when I was suicidal.

It was after shortly after she’d moved out, when I had the experience of seeing five beings outside my bedroom window.

I started the blog 16 years later, and there came a point when the blog and my podcast were gaining some popularity. I was talking publicly about my experiences, and these stories all seemed to imply some sort of UFO contact.

My ex-fiancée and I still had mutual friends, and I was worried she would stumble upon some of my UFO stories online. I felt like I should tell her myself, rather than having her find out by accident.

So I called her. The break up was awful, and we hadn’t talked in years. I explained how my life had changed, yet only hinted at my worries and the reason why I’d called her.

Finally, I just said it. “I think something happened at the house in Maine, and I think it had something to do UFOs. I think I was abducted in that house.”

She was silent. I waited, and thought she was going to hang up. After a long pause she said, “That makes *so much* sense.”

I could hear a sort of understanding in her voice, like she’d just figured something out. She tried to explain her feelings, that what I’d said seemed to match how I was acting at the time, and my emotional anguish was unbearable for her.

Her reaction hit me hard. She’d lived with me during those bleak months,

and had seen my irrational behavior. I was terribly frightened, and in her eyes my dire state could have been a result of being abducted by aliens. For her, this was a real possibility.

That phone call made my heart sink. I'd been trying hard to deny the implications of seeing those beings out my window—it was too unbelievable. The overwhelming stresses of depression could have been the source of a hallucination, and that could explain my disturbing memory. I've certainly tried to convince myself that's what it was.

The events of that winter consumed me for over a decade; both my dark emotional state, and what I'd seen out the bedroom window. Something happened in that lonely house in the Maine woods, and whatever it was, I would need to face it.

Compelled to sleep out under the stars

Monday, November 14, 2011

This little story took place in the summer of 1993 when I was 31—I'm 49 as I write this. At the time, I was living in New York City and had dedicated myself to rock climbing. I had a secret spot where I would sleep out under the stars, it was on top of a dramatic cliff system known as the Shawangunks (or the Gunks), a world class site for climbing. This was just a few miles outside the town of New Paltz, and about 90 miles north of New York City. I would sneak into the woods and camp alone on the Mohonk Preserve, a protected private park. This is a perfectly magical spot with a delightful wilderness feel.

The Gunks is a dramatic ridgeline that runs roughly north to south for several miles, and there's a cliff system along the east side where all the climbing takes place. From the top of this formation, you have lovely views out across the gentle terrain of the Hudson River Valley.

I slept on top. My secret site was an open expanse of sparkling white rock and hardwood trees. The summit crest is just a few degrees off level, tipping gently to the west. The rock itself is a hard conglomerate of white quartz pebbles and sandstone.

Much of the open area around my sleeping spot was too lumpy to be comfortable, but I found one perfectly flat area of the white rock, exactly the size of my sleeping pad. It was absolutely beautiful.

I was alone in my little apartment in Greenwich Village on a Friday night, and at about 11:30 I was sort of "compelled" to get in my car and head north to my little secret spot. At that late hour, it was an easy drive with minimal traffic. While on the FDR, I remember thinking to myself, "*Wow, they're pushin' pretty hard tonight.*"

It was a 90 minute drive, and I parked my car at around 1 a.m. I carried my sleeping bag and pad into the woods and I went to sleep. I slept well, and the next morning met with some of the local climbers and enjoyed a day of rock climbing.

Now, this "event" can easily be dismissed as just me wanting to get out of the crowded city and get an early start the next morning, I recognize that. Or, it could be just me wanting to sleep outside under the stars in a pretty place;

this is something enjoy.

All that said, I'm still confused about that voice in my head that blurted out: "*Wow, they're pushin' pretty hard tonight*."

I'd read Whitley Strieber's *Communion* the previous summer, and he gave some details about his cabin and I sensed it might be close to my secret spot, but I didn't know how far. I only thought about this years later when *Unknown Country* noted that Whitley's cabin was quite close to those cliffs. When I read that, I had a sinking feeling. But why?

I later learned that Whitley's cabin was near the little town of Accord, New York, less than four miles from where I'd slept. In *Communion*, Whitley wrote about walking out his back door and into the forest. He seemed to be describing the gentle rocky foothills below my sleeping spot. I don't know the exact location of the cabin, but it could have been less than a mile and a half away.

I'll add that some years later I returned to that spot, but not to sleep. It was the middle of a warm sunny day, and I was visiting New Paltz. I was curious if I could even find it again on the big open expanse of white rock.

I walked straight to it, and on this one lone spot, someone had spray painted a red pentagram in a circle (it may have been an "A" in a circle, I can't remember exactly). This bit of creepy graffiti was exactly centered on my sleeping spot. Nothing else was painted anywhere on the huge area. Weird!

This all happened in the in the Hudson Valley, an area plagued with UFO sightings in the 80s and 90s. I spent a lot of time there between '87 and '93, but never saw anything unusual in the sky.

That's it. Overall it's not all that eventful, but reflecting on it now—the voice in my head sure seems strange.

Death and the elusive messenger

Sunday, August 11, 2013

this closely matches the ferret I saw in my kitchen

I was alone in my house on the night of Thursday July 25. It was quiet and calm as I sat at my computer in my living room. I heard a tiny noise from the kitchen, and when I turned to look I saw a *full grown ferret sniffing around on the kitchen floor!* It was shiny and cute, and had its nose in a plastic tub that was sitting on the linoleum.

My first reaction was to just shoo it off before it got any further into the house. I got up from my computer, walked into the kitchen and calmly stated, “Hey, you can’t be in here. You need to go.”

The ferret looked up at me, then turned and smoothly stepped out the kitchen door and onto the porch. Then it turned back to look at me again, and lemme tell you—this thing was cute! We were close, just a few feet away and we both stared at each other for a long quiet moment. I took a step forward, and it hopped off the porch and into the currant bush next to the door. It was surprisingly loud as it moved through the dry grass and leaves at the base of the bush.

I stood on the porch and listened in the dark, and after a few seconds of rustling it was gone. I waited for a long time, hoping it would come back.

If you’ve never seen a ferret, it would be hard to describe the life and

vitality this animal can project. They are closely related to a mink, so their fur is gloriously smooth and silky. Even though I only saw this little guy for a moment, maybe less than 30 seconds, its coat looked radiant and shiny under my kitchen lights.

I can't say this strongly enough—seeing a wild ferret inside my house was highly unusual. Its markings matched the black footed ferret, one of the rarest mammals in North America. I saw it clearly in a brightly lit kitchen as it looked up at me from the white linoleum floor. It was about 18 inches long, and I was looking down at it from probably less than four feet away.

During the warmest part of the summer, my cabin gets hot by the end of the day. The temperature of the dry mountain air will drop dramatically just as the sun sets, so in the evening I open up both the kitchen and screen doors. It doesn't take long for the house to cool down. The kitchen door was propped open when that ferret walked into my home.

The sighting of the ferret in my kitchen happened at around 9:30 at night, and I immediately posted a Facebook note with a short explanation of what had just happened. I included an image found online that matched what I had seen. It wasn't too long after that I went to bed.

I got up early the next morning (curiously, much earlier than usual) to find an email from my brother with the subject: *Mom is in the hospital*. He briefly explained that Mom had collapsed earlier that morning, and because of the time difference he was waiting to phone me.

I called immediately. He told me our mother had a hemorrhage in her brain and it was extremely serious.

My mother has been suffering from Alzheimer's for over six years, and the severity of the disease has been increasing in just the last few weeks. I'd been checking in with my sister over the phone, and she kept me informed as our mother declined.

My father, Alexander Clelland, had died from a stroke just a little over a year ago, and my mother still thought he was alive. She did beautifully at his funeral, and in that moment she seemed to understand that he was gone. But after that it just felt cruel to ever bring it up. When she would ask, Where's Alex? We would just calmly tell her that he was out getting his hair cut. This last year of my mother's life has been sad and isolated. She has been in a memory care facility at an assisted living community. This place is about as nice as it can be, but her condition left her confused and frightened.

I flew to be with her (and my brother and sister) the next day. She never regained consciousness after her initial collapse. She died peacefully in the early morning of Wednesday, July 31. My sister and I were by her side when she passed over.

There was a real sense of relief that her suffering was over. My brother, sister and I all spoke about how we were at peace with her passing.

That beautiful ferret came into my home the same night my mother had her brain aneurysm, the event that lead to her death a few days later. I saw the ferret at 9:30 p.m. in Idaho, which would have been 11:30 p.m. on the east coast, a time my mom would have been in bed.

I calmly spoke to the ferret, “Hey, you can’t be in here. You need to go.”

That seems to have been a message to my mom.

~ ~ ~

Yesterday I spoke to a woman who is an animal communicator. When I mentioned this ferret in my kitchen (and before I mentioned my mother’s death), she listed off what a ferret represents as a spirit animal. She said it meant joy, playfulness and good news.

David Weatherly (a shaman and friend) wrote me this: “In shamanic terms, the ferret is a symbol of the ability to see hidden truths.” There is no more elusive truth to the living than what’s on the other side of Death’s great door.

Thoughts on past life hypnosis session

Saturday, July 12, 2014

> I just sat on a reclining chair for over three hours with a hypnotherapist by my side. Her name is Lorraine Flaherty. Dear God—I am beside myself as I type this. I feel great, but what I went through would be hard to describe. I sobbed uncontrollably for I'm not sure how long. It was a past life session, with only a little bit about the UFO stuff. What emerged blew my mind.

I wrote that on a beautiful summer afternoon in a London coffee shop, about an hour after the session ended. The story I whispered from that chair was exceedingly dramatic, so much so that I am cautious to believe it. It might be a metaphor, or it might have happened exactly as I'd described. What emerged was a brutal account of vanity, alcoholism, beatings, blindness and suicide, all from a previous life in the British Isles.

Before the session began, Lorraine asked me some questions about what I was hoping to uncover and solve with the hypnosis. We spoke for a few minutes, and I tried to describe some of my issues—something I've gotten quite good at after decades of being in and out of therapy. I've had a lifetime of clinical depression, and it can manifest as a kind of sallow lifelessness. I told her it can feel like my feet are trapped in cement.

I pulled off my shoes off, and reclined the chair so I was lying almost flat. Then I took some deep breaths as she lead me through a formal hypnotic induction. When she felt I was sufficiently under, she asked my higher self to go to the time and place that would offer up the best healing for my needs at that moment. It took a bit of exploring, but with her steady questioning, I started to see visual snippets. I would get a quick glimpse of something along with an impression.

I spoke of being a young student from Ireland studying art on the English mainland. This would have been sometime in the early part of the previous century, maybe the 1920s. I sensed I was a talented young artist all full of himself, I took pride in how I dressed and combed my hair.

I spoke of being a young student from Ireland studying art on the English mainland. This would have been sometime in the early part of the previous century, maybe the 1920s. I sensed I was a talented young artist all full of

himself. I saw what I was wearing, and how I greased and combed my thick dark hair. I said, “I was proud about wanting to be an artist, and I played it up, and I was dashing.”

I saw myself as terribly arrogant, and wondered aloud that I might have been gay.

Things shifted, and I described being in a hospital bed or some sort of convalescent home. I was lying comfortably on a reclining chair in an office in London, yet it felt like my face was now swollen and stiff.

I spoke slowly, “Both my cheek bones are broken, and my teeth, and I’m blind.”

I had the feeling that I’d been terribly injured from some sort of beating. Afterwards, Lorraine told me that at this point she watched my face swell up as I lay on the chair next to her.

Then I said the man who beat me felt so guilty that he committed suicide. She asked, “What else are you aware of?”

“I don’t want to be angry at the person who beat me up.”

“And who was it that beat you up?”

“My father.”

Saying that, I came unhinged. I sort of folded in on myself and sobbed uncontrollably. I am not sure how long I cried, but it felt like forever. I eventually calmed down enough to position myself back down into a reclining position in the chair. For the remaining hours of the session I felt a steady stream of tears rolling from my eyes, and into my beard.

After posting this essay I went back and reviewed the times on the recording, I cried for only two and a half minutes. That shocked me, it seemed like it lasted a lot longer.

I was presented with a brutal story. I said that my father in a previous life beat me blind, and then drank himself to death. There was also a powerful knowing that my father from that lifetime was also my father from my present life, but this doesn’t match our relationship at all. My father died two years earlier, and although he might not have been well suited to have an artist as a son, he was always supportive and encouraging. It was as if we were playing our roles again, both of us trying to improve and be better this time around.

Beyond my father, several other characters within this story seemed to have recurred as important people in this, and my previous lives. Lorraine

had me address each one of these players and instructed me to visualize a contract, and if the lesson was learned, I was to rip it up. After ushering me through a formal forgiveness process, we moved on.

Eventually Lorraine reversed the induction by counting down from ten, each number, easing me out of the trance, ushering me back to normal waking reality.

When I came out of the hypnotized state, Lorraine said it had been nearly four hours since we'd started. I was astonished—it felt like it had barely been 40 minutes. She calmly told me we had started a bit after 10 in the morning, and it was now well after two in the afternoon. This feeling of distorted time really emphasized that something remarkable had just happened.

After the session, Lorraine and I went out for lunch. We ate at a Japanese restaurant right across from her office. I felt amazing, and was nearly skipping with euphoria as we crossed the street.

I was astonished at the power of what had just happened, and asked if this was normal for her. She answered, "Well, yes—this is what I do."

While we were eating, I wondered aloud if the story that had emerged under hypnosis might not have been real, but maybe more of a metaphor.

Lorraine thoughtfully replied, "That might be so, but from my experience people don't sob uncontrollably from a metaphor."

The story that played out under hypnosis matched my own phobias and insecurities in a way that was oddly exact. The narrative seemed purposely exaggerated to hammer home specific revelations. Some of these exaggerations were absurdly over the top, like my dad killing himself because of his guilt from beating me blind. I don't know if that ever happened, yet I can see it as an outrageous metaphor for my own need to be accepted as an artist.

I feel strongly that my logical mind could never have invented such a tidy storyline, and that perhaps my unconscious mind was the author. Whatever the source, whether it was a real set of events lived by me in a previous life, or if it was scripted by some deeper part of myself, the story itself was tremendously healing. So in the end, it doesn't matter.

The lessons weren't vague or ethereal, I was pummeled with vivid symbolism. I've always had issues with my role as a creative type, and have always been terribly insecure about appearing in any way vain or prideful about my drawing skills.

I'm 51 years old, and I've never truly been able to call myself an artist. My entire life has been fraught with a sort of irrational schizophrenia around art and creativity. During the session I said, "Having pride was dangerous." That line doesn't fit my present life, but it feels like a sort of shadow influence. I came out of this hypnosis session with an awareness that I'd lived my life with a broken ego.

This wasn't a peaceful dreamlike journey—the sensations during the session were tense. I was aware of noises outside the window, and that my bare feet might be smelly in such a small office. There were moments where it seemed I was slipping away into sleep, but I would hover right on that edge. During my previous attempts with hypnosis it never felt like I was truly under, but this time I can say with absolute confidence I was definitely hypnotized.

I offered up very little without Lorraine first asking me a question; I tried to articulate any thoughts that popped into my head, and simply said the first thing that emerged without any judgment. I felt that some of the stuff I would blurt out was probably wrong, but I said it anyway. Things like places and dates, in retrospect, feel suspect. At one point she asked, "Where are you?" and I calmly replied, "Glastonbury." That was the instantaneous thought, and I said it aloud. But I had been talking about Glastonbury during the previous few days, so it may have been the wrong answer to her question.

At several points we got into what felt like a strong call-and-response rhythm. She asked questions, and I answered them without any hesitation. I was saying things that made absolutely no sense. She would ask, "How many lifetimes had you lived with the spirit of your father?" I would immediately reply, "Ninety-six." Could that be a literal truth? I have no idea, but as a kind of symbolic framework, it holds a real power.

My eyes were closed the entire time, except for one brief instant. We were at the point when I had just said the single most important thing of the entire session, the one pivotal event, the thing that made me sob like a dam had burst. As I was crying my body was going through a set of spasms, and Lorraine was calmly telling me not to worry, that I was fine, and to release whatever I was feeling. It was at this point that someone in the hall opened the door and stepped into the small office. I heard a man with a British accent say something in like, "Here I am—*Whoops—Sorry*…" I opened my eyes just long enough to see Lorraine though my tears, her arm was outstretched

and her palm out in a forceful pose that exuded the command STOP!

That moment was excruciating, and it felt like my life depended on *not* snapping out of the hypnotic trance. I just tried to hold on and continued to cry. What seems absolutely bizarre is that whoever interrupted made his entrance at the single most intense moment of the entire four hour hypnosis session. Not sure what to read into that, if anything.

I've chosen not to share all the details of the story that unfolded, some of it just seems a bit too personal. What I can say is that the stuff that made me cry had nothing to do with UFOs. It had a lot to do with my role as an artist in a previous life, and how I acted out in a prideful arrogant way, and how this lead to an irrational punishment.

I did not expect this hypnosis thing to go down like it did. I am not locked into a need to frame anything as literal, but the deeper concern is how I can use this session to pull my feet out of the cement, my way of describing how stuck I've been feeling.

During the session Lorraine asked me where I was from in Ireland, and without any hesitation I said Murray. After the session I tried to search out any place in Ireland that would go by the name Murray, but couldn't find anything that matched, including a long string of spelling variations. But there is a Moray Scotland, pronounced Murray in Gaelic. I had no knowledge of this before searching that word.

My family ancestry is from Scotland, and Lorraine's is from Ireland. Could it be that I was trying to tailor some of my answers in way to please her? The imagery in my mind's eye could have been anywhere in the British Isles, yet there was nothing particularly Irish about what I was seeing.

As far as any UFO stuff, it was minimal in the context of the overall session. I didn't have any sort of "on the craft" kind of memories emerge—what did come up was that I had an alien entity who had been following me throughout this and previous lives. Lorraine asked if this being had a name, and without hesitation I said, "Quentar." I think I made an audible groan after saying that, it just sounded so cheesy. Quentar, my guardian angel from space, how embarrassing!

She asked, "Who is Quentar?" I calmly answered, "He is myself." Not sure what that might mean, but I have to say this reply felt completely honest.

Lorraine told me afterwards that she had used a pendulum at the very beginning of the session.

A pendulum is a simple divining tool, it's nothing more than a small crystal pendant at the end of a chain. The user will hold the chain steady, let the crystal dangle, ask a yes or no question and wait for an answer. The pendulum gently swings or rotates as a reply.

She did this silently while my eyes were closed. The pendulum indicated that someone, or something else was there with us. This was the reason she asked me the questions at the end that brought out the stuff about Quentar and his (or its) hidden role in my life.

I can't quite recall all of what came up with Quentar, but a story surfaced where I'd chosen to incarnate here on Earth to play some important role. This dovetails with a lot of what I've read over the decades, so I am cautious to fully trust this part. There's a lot more about this in the following post.

There are over three hours of recorded audio from that session. I haven't listened to it yet, but when I do, hopefully I'll find some deeper clues.

While talking with Lorraine over Japanese noodles, I spoke about how Dr. John Mack, someone with a foundation in scientific imperialism, was confronted by something that challenged his logical mindset. He had interviewed a native shaman from the Brazilian rainforest who shared legends of flying saucers landing in the Amazon basin, and how men emerged from these space ships. When Dr. Mack asked if this was literally true or metaphoric, the shaman replied that among their people it made no difference.

Dr. Mack said that other shamans had essentially told him the same thing, that these mystics were from what we'd consider primitive cultures, and weren't tied down to literal truths. This is in direct opposition to how we pragmatic westerners cling to the literal.

A few short years ago, I would've been apoplectic trying to make sense of the stuff that emerged from this hypnosis session—I would have seen it only in the confining framework of our overriding consensus reality. I think I would've crumbled if I'd had this same session back in 2006, it would have been too much. But my view of reality has changed dramatically, and I can now hold onto these elusive and divergent ideas without breaking. I'm no longer tied down to the literal, I'm now at peace (well, almost) with the metaphorical.

There were a few other things that came up, and these felt like the kinds of things I would say, but in the context of the hypnotic trance they seem worth

noting here. Follow your heart was a message that was repeated several times, as was forgiveness. I need to meditate and draw more. I need to be less stubborn, to let go of everything and move on. I need to truly live and I need faith in my own soul. And I spoke about the owls too, I said, “They are a metaphor for the mystery.”

I have no answer if the recalled experiences were real or metaphoric. What I can say, is that this one session was remarkably healing. I don’t care about the objective truth, because the results have been so powerful.

Transcript of a hypnosis session

Monday, July 18, 2016

I had a hypnosis session in the summer of 2014, and wrote a post about it within days. This was a past life regression conducted by London based therapist Lorraine Flaherty.

This wasn't hypnosis to retrieve UFO memories, the intent was to explore past lives to help relieve current issues of clinical depression. It was only at the end of the session that Lorraine brought up the UFO subject.

I've recently had a transcription made from the audio recording, and comparing what I'd initially written and what I'd actually said under hypnosis was quite close. A few points were misremembered, and some of these are noted and clarified in this post.

Within the first few minutes of the hypnotic induction, Lorraine asked me if there was anyone else (or any other energy) in the room, and I said yes. She brought this up again near the end of the session, and for the next 25 minutes she asked me questions and I gave my answers. This time was focused on my UFO experiences. Reading this and hearing the audio has been fascinating. I cannot in anyway vouch that what I said is true, but it feels truthful. It may not be a literal truth, but more a metaphoric kind of honesty.

I've included a partial transcript of the hypnosis session. The focus of the excerpt is our dialogue on the UFO issues.

> **Lorraine:** While we're here in this space, as you mentioned earlier, there may have been an energy that was currently in your energy field that didn't belong to you. I'm just going to ask for that energy to make themselves known to you now. And as you do that, what are you aware of?
>
> **Mike:** I don't know. Alien?
>
> **Lorraine:** Does this alien have a name?
>
> **Mike:** Quentar.

This was spoken with an audible groan of embarrassment. Right in the moment I recognized how cheesy that sounded.

Lorraine: I want you ask Quentar what is it that he's doing in your energy field?

Mike: Guiding.

Lorraine: Where is he from?

Mike: From like, somewhere else. Like, *not here*.

Lorraine: And why is it that Quentar is in your energy field guiding you? Why specifically?

Mike: It's something important.

Lorraine: What is it that's important?

Mike: Fate.

Lorraine: And what about fate?

Mike: Like, big, big, grand collective fate.

Lorraine: What is the big grand collective fate?

Mike: Humanity.

Lorraine: What is it about humanity?

Mike: Dying.

Lorraine: What is Quentar's message? What is it that he's guiding you to do?

Mike: Tell stories.

Lorraine: Yeah...

Mike: My heart is killing me right now.

Lorraine: What's happening to your heart?

Mike: It's just painful.

This really happened, my heart *was* aching, there was a palpable feeling of sharp pain. It came on fast and only lasted for the short time we addressed these few questions.

Lorraine: Ask Quentar, why is your heart hurting? What's this about?

Mike: Burden.

Lorraine: This burden, have you been carrying this through many lifetimes?

Mike: I don't know.

Lorraine: Ask Quentar, what does he say?

Mike: Yes.

Lorraine: And is it time to relieve that burden now?

Mike: No.

Lorraine: When will be the time for you to be relieved of that burden?

Mike: When my job is done.

Lorraine: What is the job that needs to be done?

Mike: Save humanity.

Lorraine: What are these stories that you need to be telling.

Mike: Symbolic.

Lorraine: Symbolic of what?

Mike: Ascension.

Lorraine: What is it you need to be teaching or sharing about ascension?

Mike: Vital.

Lorraine: What needs to happen in order for people to achieve it?

Mike: Let go.

Lorraine: And what is it they need to let go of?

Mike: Everything.

Lorraine: What's the best way for them to be able to do that?

Mike: Shock.

Lorraine: What kind of shock?

Mike: Existential. Upsetting the table.

Lorraine: And in doing that, upsetting the table, providing that shock, what will emerge from that?

Mike: Something very new.

Lorraine: And what will that new thing be?

Mike: Survival.

Lorraine: Why is it that you've been chosen to do this?

Mike: Because I'm doubting.

Lorraine: What is it that you're doubting?

Mike: The reality of it.

Lorraine: And what is your connection to Quentar.

Mike: It's me.

Lorraine: I want you to ask Quentar about the experiences that you've had, when you were younger at the age of 12. What was it that happened to you when time went missing?

Mike: A sign, an awakening.

Lorraine: What specifically happened to you?

Mike: I died. *(long pause)* I think that's metaphoric.

Lorraine: Where were you taken in that time?

Mike: I want to say about fifty feet above the neighborhood.

Lorraine: Then what happened?

Mike: I get that it's pretty bad…

My strong sense was that it's better that I do NOT know what happened. I got the impression that they know I shouldn't be shown anything about that night.

Lorraine: So is it necessary for you to know exactly the details of what happened to you when you were gone?

Mike: *NO!* (said strongly)

Lorraine: Then it's more important to focus on the reason why. What was it that they were hoping to achieve by taking you?

Mike: To take my sperm.

Lorraine: Why was it that they needed to do that.

Mike: I don't know. Like a test or an obligation or a duty?

Lorraine: An obligation or duty to who?

Mike: To whatever their agenda is.

Lorraine: What was it that that sperm was used for?

Mike: Making... Something to do with hybrids.

Lorraine: I want you to ask Quentar if you do have hybrids offspring somewhere in outer space?

Mike: Yes.

Lorraine: How many?

Mike: 24.

Lorraine: What's the significance of this for you?

Mike: That it's real.

Lorraine: And at any point have any of these 24 tried to contact you, or been in contact with you in any way?

Mike: No.

Lorraine: I want you to ask Quentar about the other experiences that you had where you missed time or other experiences when you were out seeing that structure near the rocks.

This is a reference to the round structure up on a hillside during my March 10th, 2013 confirmation experience in the southern Utah desert.

Mike: Important?

Lorraine: Why was it important?

Mike: Because of the role I had to play.

Lorraine: And what's that role.

Mike: To be honest.

Lorraine: And what is it that like you need to be honest about?

Mike: Symbology.

Lorraine: What's the most important aspect of this symbology?

Mike: That it's real…

Lorraine: Is this something that you had agreed to before you came down into this lifetime?

Mike: Yes.

Lorraine: What was the purpose of it?

Mike: Change humanity.

Lorraine: And how is this particular assignment going to change humanity?

Mike: It's required.

Lorraine: And it's required for what purpose?

Mike: For everyone.

Lorraine: And what's to be the outcome of this particular assignment?

Mike: A better human.

Lorraine: And can we just check with Quentar; does this also potentially mean a greater understanding of emotions in those hybrid children?

Mike: I don't know, I get the feeling that that's beyond it. Or not even that important.

Lorraine: And so the experience that you had, when you were in the house in Maine; what was that connected to?

Mike: *Saving my life. (my voice is shaky and lost sounding)*

Lorraine: In what way were they saving your life?

Mike: I was on the edge of suicide.

Lorraine: And so again I want you to check those experiences that

you had of the deep sadness and the states of depression; is that all part of this test as well, the agreement that you would experience those intense lows for some reason?

Mike: They got out of control.

Lorraine: What is it that you need to be aware of now in order to ensure that you don't find yourself going into that place again?

Mike: Faith.

Lorraine: Faith in what?

Mike: Myself.

Lorraine: What needs to happen in order for you to really trust; to really have faith?

Mike: Abandonment.

Lorraine: Does Quentar have a message for you about this?

Mike: Live…

Lorraine: I want you to just check if there is there anything you need to be concerned about with regards to the experiences you've had in the past? To be able to let those go now.

Mike: Be honest. They're real.

Lorraine: How does it feel to know that they are real?

Mike: Almost boring. Or almost—mundane?

Lorraine: It is what it is. Check with Quentar to see if there is any final message that he for you.

Mike: Meditate.

Lorraine: Okay. We're going to thank Quentar for coming forward, making his presence know, and sharing his information. Now, while we are here in this space, there is going to be someone here to greet you with unconditional love and support with a message for you. It might be your higher self, it might be a guide, it might be an angelic presence or it might be somebody you know. Who's there for you?

Mike: Myself.

Lorraine: What's the message that yourself has for you?

Mike: Don't be so fucking stubborn.

Lorraine: Is there anything else?

Mike: Live.

Lorraine: Anything else?

Mike: I see owls. I think that's a metaphor.

I really saw owls. My eyes were closed but I saw the simple outlines and shapes of owls floating in my vision.

Lorraine: What do the owls represent?

Mike: Mystery.

Lorraine: So you can bring back that symbol of the owls that represent that mystery. Very soon, I'm going to be bringing you back to full waking consciousness. When you come back, you will bring everything that you need. And when appropriate, the right information in the right way will continue to flow to you... Allowing you to really

follow your heart, to allow that honest and truthful sharing of the knowledge and insights that have been made available to you. And so now, in a few moments, I'm going to be bringing you back.

Lorraine began the formal process of ending the hypnotic state. There was a slow steady counting down from ten to full consciousness. As it ends you can hear me sitting up in the reclining chair.

Lorraine: And now you're back.

Mike: Was I crying for a while?

Lorraine: Yeah. I seem to have that effect on people.

Mike: I am so fucking hungry.

I came out of the trance, sat up and looked at Lorraine, then blurted out that last line about being hungry. This plays into something I'd said before we'd begun the hypnosis. Lorraine had asked me about my life and my issues, and I described what is usually my very first symptom of clinical depression—I lose the ability to feel hunger. Something as normal as the desire to eat food seems to fade away. So when I blurted out that I was hungry, I recognized the power and meaning of what I'd said. Saying I was hungry meant I was healthy, and in that moment I knew I was cured.

Additional text added 2018:

The past-life hypnosis session had a profound impact on my issues with depression. So much so that the UFO dialogue at the end seemed insignificant. I didn't remember much of what I had said. After reading the transcript two years later, I was taken aback by the power of it. There was something so grand about what I said. At one point I said *my job here was to save humanity*. I mean, that's kind of over the top. Listening to the audio I'm a little embarrassed at how grandiose it sounds.

But, in the moment I spoke those words there was no judgment. I wasn't evaluating anything, instead it felt like I was simply answering questions. Lorraine would ask a question and I would reply without thinking, almost

like a slow motion tennis game.

I carefully examined the dialogue, and at times Lorraine's questions seem to be coming from some deeper place. I asked her about this and she said, "Yes, sometimes I leave the room."

My sense is that she was in a trance state too, at least to some degree.

This dialog addressed in a remarkable pair of audio interviews on Whitley Strieber's *Dreamland*, where Whitley, Lorraine and myself explored the meaning and source of this transcript. These are linked here.

~ ~ ~

Some of Lorraine's dialog has been abbreviated in this transcript. I need to thank Meghan Moriarity for her work on the transcription.

Lorraine Flaherty is a past-life hypnotherapist based out of the UK. Her 2013 book, *Healing with Past Life Therapy: Transformational Journeys through Time and Space*, is a study of her healing work.

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THE OWLS

At our old cabin, as night gathered, the owls would often come, standing in the trees around our house… it became clear that we were not the only close encounter witnesses who had owls in their lives. I was fascinated by this phenomenon, and sensed at the time that it could be seen not simply as a sort of eerie mystery, but more richly, as a language.

—Whitley Strieber, *The Super Natural*

I've written two big books on owls, and many of the stories in those pages were gleaned from my blog. I've also asked people to tell me their owl experiences, especially if they involve UFOs. Because of all this I'm now known as the "owl guy." That might seem like a burden, but it's not—this role has been rewarding and endlessly fascinating.

I'm indebted to everyone who has shared their stories. I realize I've become an archivist for people's personal experiences, and there's a responsibility to do more than just catalog these accounts and tuck them away. There is a need to share. My hope is that the people who read these stories will end up being just a little more open to the deeper aspects of our reality.

Here's an excerpt from the introduction to *Stories from The Messengers*: "The owl is a symbol. It's much more than just a bird with big eyes, it represents something in the darkness just beyond what we know in our conscious minds. It's a red flag forcing me to pay attention, a clue to look deeper."

I believe that. These ideas are the result of over a decade of obsessively researching owls and their connection to highly charged events like

synchronicities, ancient archetypes, dreams, shamanic initiation, psychedelic hallucination, spiritual transformation, death, and above all UFO contact.

Billy Pilgrim hears a flying saucer and thinks it's an owl!

Wednesday, March 28, 2018

There are a lot of accounts of owls showing up at the time of UFO contact, but this history doesn't seem to go back very far. I've been pointing to Whitley Strieber's 1987 book *Communion* as the very first instance in popular culture with an owl tied directly to UFO abduction. On page 21, Whitley describes waking the morning after his 1985 contact event with an, "…intense memory of seeing a barn owl staring at me through the window sometime during the night."

But a reader of this blog (Mr. Smith) found a reference from 18 years earlier from another one of my heroes—Kurt Vonnegut!

I'm revising what I say.

Billy Pilgrim, Vonnegut's protagonist in *Slaughterhouse-Five* (1969), hears a flying saucer and thinks it's an owl—all in the moments before an abduction!

This is a perfect collision of owls and UFOs, blurring together to the point where they get mixed up. I realize *Slaughterhouse-Five* is a novel and *Communion* is non-fiction, but I'm not concerned—I'm more intrigued by the clarity of the symbolism. And both books are, without question, important icons of twentieth century pop-culture.

> **An excerpt from page 95 of Slaughterhouse-Five**:
> Overhead he heard the cry of what might have been a melodious owl, but it wasn't a melodious owl. It was a flying saucer from Tralfamadore, navigating in both space and time, therefore seeming to Billy Pilgrim to have come from nowhere all at once. Somewhere a big dog barked. The saucer was one hundred feet in diameter, with portholes around its rim. The light from the portholes was a pulsing purple. The only noise it made was the owl song.[5]

I read Slaughterhouse-Five while I was in high school, probably back in 1979. To say it blew my mind would be an understatement. I even saw Kurt Vonnegut when I lived in New York. We stood in line together at a corner bodega. He was buying a watermelon. (I'm suddenly writing in very short

sentences)

Whitley Strieber wrote eloquently about owls in decades past

Wednesday, November 9, 2016

I recently purchased two of Whitley Strieber's books on Kindle, *Transformation* (1988) and *The Communion Letters* (1997). I already had these in their paper versions, and read both of them shortly after their publication.

Having these in a digital format allows for easy word searches, and I looked up the word owl. I expected a few owl accounts to be peppered throughout these books, but I was impressed by Whitley's insights. What he says is what I've worked so hard to say in my own book, yet what he has written is poetic, perceptive and to the point.

I read these books with great care, including all the stuff about owls, and decades later I wrote my own book with a similar flavor woven into my ideas. I didn't remember any of the specifics about owls while rereading these excerpts, yet it seems fair to say that I absorbed these ideas during my initial reading. These ideas may have sat in my mind in some semi-dormant way, quietly informing me during my years of owl research.

In retrospect I'm glad I didn't find these quotes during the writing process of *The Messengers*. I would have leaned on these ideas like a crutch. Curiously, both books were on my shelf during the writing process, yet I never opened them—but I sure did open *Communion* (1987).

This blog will now serve as a platform for these powerful quotes about owls and their connection to the UFO experience.

From *Transformation: Book II* of the Communion Series:

> On December 27 and 28 [1986], Anne and I saw a number of magnificent owls around the house during daylight hours. I observed a great gray owl and we both saw another owl, but it flew away too quickly for us to identify it. At that time I was already aware of the association of owls as an apparent screen memory for the visitors. But these owls were not screen memories. They were simply ordinary owls, though their presence during daylight hours was unusual. [6]

~ ~ ~

We chatted for awhile and I soon found myself talking about the owls we had been seeing.

Barry was surprised to hear this because he had had a very unusual dream the night before about an owl. He proceeded to describe what sounded to me like a screen memory for a visitor experience. He had been asleep in a house where he was house-sitting until the new owners moved in. Suddenly he was awakened by what sounded like somebody kicking a baseboard heater. He got up because the house was new and he'd helped build it.

He knew that the heating system shouldn't be doing that. He walked into the living room. The first thing he saw was a pair of huge, dark eyes. When he later saw the cover of *Communion* he was amazed by the similarity. At the time, he had the bizarre impression that an enormous gray owl with big, black eyes was in the room. The owl took him into a large, vaulted chamber that reminded him of the Sydney Opera House. There it turned into a bird of paradise.

He remembered sitting beside a small man who seemed to him like a gnome or a gremlin. His impression was that this man was good-natured. He didn't remember anything about the man's appearance, except that he was "dark."

The next morning Barry had what he said was an extremely strange feeling. He seemed "loose" in his body.… Had they somehow drawn all those owls to my place, thus ensuring that Barry and I would start talking about them when we met.[7]

From the *Communion Letters:*

Although by no means universally present in the letters, probably the most telling symbolic consistencies involve owls, wolves, and ritualized knocking sounds.

These symbols are not part of our culture. In fact, they come to modern minds like words from a lost language...

Thus, there is a surprisingly clear message being communicated, although using symbols that have long ago been dropped from our lives.

Even more consistent than the symbolic content of the letters is their strangeness, which is so extraordinary that it seems almost to place these narratives beyond the scope of the human imagination.[8]

The excerpt above was written by the Striebers in the afterword. The powerful symbolic elements within these stories wasn't lost on Anne and Whitley.

What follows was not written by Whitley or Anne, but was part of a letter they'd received from someone who was trying to articulate her experiences. The first part mentions owls, and the follow-up describes her own emotional and existential struggles. The chapter is titled *More Owls*, and is one of the most powerful and unsettling accounts of contact I've ever read:

I saw these giant owls flying back and forth across the street. They were the kind which I

> think are called barn owls, and they had huge wingspans, along the lines of four feet or better. Perhaps they get that big, I don't know. Anyway, I watched these owls fly around for a while. They would fly from the edge of one building, swoop across the street, and perch on the edge of the building across the street. They did this for a while, and I just sat there watching them. I can't remember my exact thoughts at the time, but I remember being rather uneasy.[9]

The writer then describes what seems to be contact with a gray, and a sudden transition to an unknown realm. Her account continues below:

> Mr. Strieber, I'm scared. After this happened, I felt like I had been standing on bedrock, and that it had dropped out from under my feet, leaving me floating in an ocean whose bottom I could not see. I felt as if everything I thought I'd been clear about for seventeen years—the things that people learn—were lies, and that this was what was important. But it scared me, and I wasn't sure that I wasn't crazy. I in fact tried to commit suicide because I didn't want to be a lunatic.[10]

There are no references to owls in the excerpt above, but what this woman describes is a terrible reminder that these experiences are not easy. What unfolds can be traumatic and nearly impossible to understand.

An owl arrives while reading about owls and UFO contact

Friday, March 31, 2017

In mid-September of last year, I received a very interesting letter from a man named Fred in Pennsylvania. He shared exactly the kind of experience that is at the heart of my owl and UFO research.

The event took place around 1990 or ’91 when he was in his mid-30s. Fred had recently purchased Whitley Strieber’s books *Communion* and *Transformation*. He wrote that he’d always been interested in UFOs and sci-fi, and was terrified when he saw the movie based on *Communion*. He said, “I never understood the intensity of the fear… and wanted to read these books as a way to handle the terror I felt from the movie.”

There was some tension at home one night—his wife and daughters were bickering about school and clothes. He describes the events that followed:

> I retreated to the basement and started looking through the *Transformation* book. I came to a part where he was talking about seeing owls before an ET encounter. This was the first I had heard about this.
>
> My wife then frantically called me upstairs, so I shut the book and went to see what was wrong.
>
> She looked at me and said, “There’s an owl on the porch.”
>
> I kind of froze for a second because of what I had just read, and slowly went to look out the front door window. I had two snow tires laying on the porch, and sitting on top of them was a very large owl. I stared in disbelief as it turned its head and looked right up at me, spread its wings and flew away. I could not believe what I just saw, its wingspan stretched across the entire porch which is six feet. I felt an increasing terror at the coincidence of just reading about a possible relationship between owls and aliens, but I had to push the thought aside and help get the kids settled for bed.
>
> I had a very difficult time getting to sleep that night, and when I did I had terrible nightmares about little demon faced creatures crawling around the bedroom window. They were mumbling something when my alarm went off, and that was all I remember about the dream.
>
> I have never seen any owls so close since, and have only told this to a few people. I have hesitated to talk about it because of the coincidence of reading what I did right before seeing the owl.
>
> This is the first time I have written this down. Other than how it effected me, it’s just an interesting coincidence.

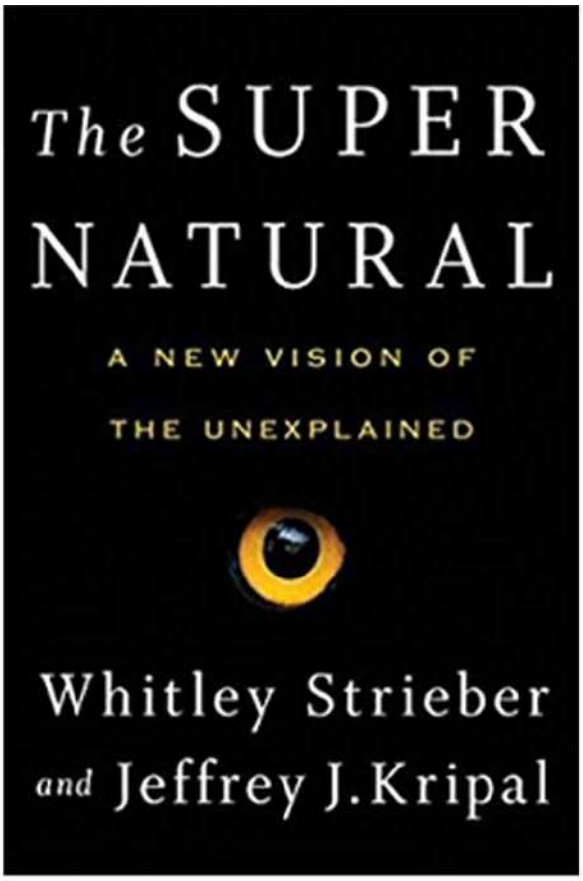
That he was called to see an owl at precisely the moment he was reading about owls and UFO contact is astounding. This kind of testimony should feel normal to me by now, but it doesn't. I am continually amazed at the power of these stories.

He told me in a follow-up email that, "I actually never did read the *Transformation* book. I was too scared at the time… I was only flipping through it that night when I saw the parts about owls."

This account prompted me to go back and review *Transformation*. I bought a Kindle version and searched out the owl segments. I was shocked at how much owl stuff was in that book. What Whitley wrote back in 1998 is remarkably insightful, and it generated a blog post where some of his ideas about owls are reviewed (that was the post just before this one).

The Super Natural and owls

Wednesday, February 7, 2018



the golden eye of an owl

This blog post was initially part of the manuscript for the upcoming book *Stories from The Messengers*. It got nixed during the editing process and I'm sharing it here.

Whitley Strieber and Jeffrey Kripal teamed up to write an important book —*The Super Natural*. The subtitle is, *A new vision of the unexplained*. Together, they argue that much of what we would call paranormal is instead part of our natural world. They address a long list of events, from ancient religious apparitions to modern UFO accounts, and use these experiences to argue their point.

In their book they touch on the strange life of the early UFO witness Kenneth Arnold, I wrote an entire chapter on this same man in the companion

owl book.

Jeff said of Kenneth Arnold: "… he suggested that these flying objects were in fact 'groups and masses of living organisms that are as much a part of our atmosphere and space as the life we find in the oceans.' This is pure Charles Fort, by the way. Was he reading Fort?" [11]

I saw that passage in *The Super Natural* while hard at work on my own chapter about Kenneth Arnold. Jeff had asked, somewhat rhetorically, if Kenneth Arnold had ever read books by Charles Fort. I had the answer.

My research had lead me to a 1981 article where Arnold pulls a copy of *The Complete Books of Charles Fort* off his shelf in his home to make a point. He was fed up with the narrow views of most UFO researchers and told the journalist, "I was astounded when I read Fort's books. There were similarities between what I investigated and what Fort had collected." [12]

So, Arnold had not only read Fort, he could relate to it.

I was giddy with pride—one of my heroes had asked a question I could answer! I sent that article to Jeff on August 6, 2016, and without knowing it at the time, this was Charles Fort's 142nd birthday! Thank you, Wikipedia.

In *The Super Natural*, Jeff wondered if Charles Fort had some private "abduction" experience. And this is precisely my speculation about Kenneth Arnold in my book, that he might be an abductee.[13]

The Super Natural was published less than two months after *The Messengers*, and the cover of both books feature bright yellow owl eyes. My book has two eyes, and their book has only one. On the amazon website there is a place that states, "Customers who bought this item also bought," and it shows the books that were most commonly purchased together. Our books have been shown side by side for two years, and I cannot put into words how proud this makes me feel.

I feel presumptuous comparing my book to theirs. Both Whitley and Jeff have played such important roles in shaping my ideas about these elusive issues, and there is a similarity in content and tone within these two books. Both are looking at the outlying reports to try to come to terms with the deepest mysteries, and both books were being created at the same time.

Both Jeff and Whitley came at these ideas from their own unique perspectives, but the implications are similar. Someone might try to describe a profound spiritual experience, while someone else might try to describe direct UFO contact. These are conflicting experiences, yet both can produce a

similar kind of transformation. In my own way, I've been trying to address these same ideas by following the path of owl stories.

Jeff wrote about his co-author: "Whitley captures this idea perfectly (and much more clearly) when he writes about his uncanny owl encounters: 'I was fascinated by this phenomenon, and sensed at the time that it could be seen not simply as a sort of eerie mystery, but much more richly, as language.'"[14]

The owl, both literal and metaphorical, runs like a thread throughout *The Super Natural*, tying their ideas together. Also worth noting; the owl is the mascot of Rice University, where Jeff is the chair of the religious studies department.

Whitley wrote this in *The Super Natural:* "More interestingly to me, people will identify the owl as the totem animal of the visitors." That single sentence sums up the entirety of both books in *The Messengers* series.[15]

Owls as moderators in a debate!

Sunday, June 4, 2017

A woman named Linda contacted me with a wonderful story. She's an experiencer and she had this to say about owls:

> There has been a correlation between owls and some of my contact experiences. For instance, I'd be reading, suddenly think of the ET's and one of the owls would start hooting right over the house. Or I'd feel the ET presence outside, walk out the door and the owls would call to me from another part of the property. These events were so frequent in the beginning of my experiences that I have no doubt as to the synchronicity. It's been proven in my mind, so I was a believer in owls as ET's or messengers of the ET's before I ran into your work.

While in college, Linda was engaged to a brilliant scientist named Ed. They eventually broke it off and went their separate ways. Thirty years later they met up again, and Ed ended up moving in with Linda while looking for an apartment in her area. During this time they would sit together behind her house in a small meadow surrounded by longleaf pines and mature oaks. This was also a spot frequented by owls.

Linda told me that Ed was heavily invested in the materialistic sciences. If something wasn't proven with scientific instruments, it didn't exist. Their conversations often ended up as fiery debates.

There was an evening when they were out in the back field arguing about the difference between *proof* and *belief.* It was getting heated, and Ed could be intense when they got into this stuff. They are both strong willed and good at arguing their beliefs. Linda wrote:

> What follows is one day where the owls got the last word in one of our debates… Ed and I were arguing about the existence of extraterrestrials. That was the crux of the belief vs proof debate. As an experiencer I of course believe, as a scientist Ed felt there had to be physical proof that had been released to the scientific community and examined by scientists.
>
> He said that belief without scientific proof was as invalid as religion… I was frustrated by my inability to describe how once you've experienced the things that I had, belief wasn't what someone told me about or something another person had duplicated in an experiment —it was a reality.
>
> I was becoming exhausted from the effort and after what seemed forever I finally found

the words that hit the nail square on the head, I blurted out, “Belief doesn’t appear out of someone else’s proof, Ed.”

I spoke the next line very emphatically, *“Experience is belief!”*

There was a microsecond of silence after my statement, but only a microsecond. Then a chorus of owls directly over our heads went into simultaneous tumult!

Up until then we had NO idea there were any nearby. There were maybe five owls perched right over us and in that instant they all shouted together—exploding in obvious agreement and applause to my concluding argument. These were great horned owls, and they’re very large and very loud. We never saw them even though it was broad daylight.

I didn’t say another word, I didn’t have to, choosing instead to let the experience stand on its own. I just looked at Ed and he looked at me. Neither one of us uttered a sound, we got up, left the field, and walked silently back to the house. We never spoke of this event or had this discussion again. That time the owls got the last word! And with Ed and I that was pretty darn hard to do.

I love this story! It’s playful and the punchline is perfect. Owls as the moderators in a debate between an experiencer and a scientist. Right on for those owls! Also, Linda’s letter was edited slightly for clarity.

An enormous owl and missing time

Tuesday, November 25, 2014

The Secret Sun is a remarkable blog from author and researcher Christopher Knowles. There is a short post from July 16, 2009 titled: Owls.

Chris shares a few ideas about the owl and its symbolism. He also wrote about how his mother would collect owl figurines and display them in their home. I have more than a few examples where experiencers will say their mother collected owls.

What's of great interest to me was one of the comments below this posting. It was left by someone named Jessi, and here's the full text:

> Wanted to share an owl story from my childhood. My family was moving to another town which took four hours by car to commute. My dad was in a truck in front of my mom, me and my sister who were riding in a car behind him. It was late at night and we were making our last load for the day. We were moving into an old farm house out in the country. We were on a dirt road and my dad was right in front of us.
>
> My mom stopped the car because she saw something walking in the road. It was the most enormous owl any of us had seen. It simply walked in front of the car, turned to look at us (realize that it was big enough to see us over the hood of the car) and continued to walk across the road (or waddle maybe) when we got to the house my dad was irate and wanting to know where we had been. Evidently, over an hour had passed while we watched that owl cross our path.

Jessi doesn't give an estimated size of this enormous owl, but she does say it was tall enough to be seen over the hood of the car. This is something I have heard repeatedly from various witnesses. This puts the owl at about four feet tall.

I even photographed a four foot tall cardboard cutout of an owl in front of my car. I did this to show how improbable it would be to see an owl that large. I took the picture on a lonely stretch of road at night, and I had to carefully position the car to match what gets described by witnesses. I've included the image in a post titled: *Four foot tall owls and an emerald green light body.*

Taking this photo was super creepy, even though the owl was nothing more than piece of painted cardboard. How anyone could be dismissive of a

sighting like this implies some form of mind control, because it would be terrifying!

There is also over an hour of missing time reported by the people in the car who saw this owl. This plays out as a series of clues that seems to imply a UFO contact event, with an impossibly large owl as a screen memory.

What also stands out, especially for me, is the time count on this comment was 1:23 PM. This number sequence screams at me to pay attention.

I have come back to this post repeatedly over the last five and a half years, and it is quite likely I'd read this comment, but it didn't jump out at me until just a few days ago. If anyone knows Jessi who wrote the comment, please get ahold of me!

Owls, UFOs and synchronicity

Thursday, October 31, 2013

> *Animal symbols will show up at certain times, almost like reality is a dream and animals can be placed into the dream when needed.*

This statement came to me in an email at a point when my owl research had swallowed me. The quote was from a man describing an owl sighting on a telephone pole in front of his recently departed father-in-law's farm. He passed the owl while driving home from the hospital, just a few hours after his death. He felt strongly it was the spirit symbol of his father-in-law, looking at the farm one last time before he left.[16]

This short little statement rang true. I sense that the scriptwriters of reality can easily pencil in symbolic imagery directly into the storyline of our lives. If they need to punctuate something within the narrative, they'll just add what's required for the desired effect.

The animal looking at the farm was an owl, and this is a powerful symbol. This post begins with an insightful statement. If you changed the opening words from "animal symbols" to either "UFOs" or "synchronicities", the message would still ring true.

Hooting owl heard in UFO video

Sunday, September 18, 2016

Suzanne Chancellor sent me a link to an intriguing Youtube video titled: *Bizarre 'UFOs' caught shining over forest by dog walker moments before fully charged camera mysteriously dies.*

This short video shows an unusual glowing dot in the sky—while the audio catches a hooting owl.

The footage seems to be shot from a tripod, and shows a bright light in the evening sky above a row of trees. The 1:32 minute clip ends with the camera widening out to reveal a farmer's field. He then zooms in on three tiny dots in a different area of the evening sky. The camera man narrates what he's seeing, and you can hear the tension in his voice.

Listening carefully at the 00:53 and 00:58 mark, there is the high pitched call of a tawny owl. Yes, I realize that this is a very common bird in the British Isles, but gee-whiz.

Let me say this very clearly: *A UFO is seen at the same moment an owl is heard!*

I have long wanted to find a photograph with an owl and UFO in the same image. I haven't found that yet, but this is just as impressive.

The UK tabloid, *The Mirror*, has a short article on the man who captured the footage on September 12, 2016. No mention of the owl. The article states:

> A petrified dog walker has captured eerie footage of three shining orbs floating above a UK forest. The 32-year-old man, who wished to remain anonymous, said he kept noticing the UFOs as he walked his dog through the hills near Great Shefford in Berkshire.
>
> On Monday he decided to take a camera with him to capture the mysterious objects in a bid to discover what they were. But after less than two minutes of filming the UFOs his camera suddenly died—despite being fully charged.
>
> The orbs have left fellow residents in the leafy village in West Berkshire baffled after they have been spotted a number of times over the past three months.

As an aside:

If you ask a child in America to make the sound of an owl, they'll say, "Hooo-Hooo!" Ask a child in England the same question and they'll say, "Twit-Twooo!"

This discrepancy is because the great gray and great horned owls both make a low haunting hooting call, but neither are found in Europe. The most iconic owl in the British Isles is the tawny owl, and it makes a staggered flute like call that sounds a bit like twit-twoo. Only a few of the largest owls actually hoot—all the rest make different sounds, often quite screechy. This is the kind of stuff you learn when immersed in owl research.

Owls, UFOs and Area 51

Thursday, May 19, 2016

The 2011 documentary *The Truth is Out There* features Dean Haglund (of the *X-Files* and *The Lone Gunmen*), playing the host and asking questions. There is one point in the film where an actor sits alone on stage and reads from his autobiography. He tells a familiar story of seeing owls and a UFO.

The man on stage was Tucker Smallwood, a veteran of theater and screen whose long list of credits include Francis Ford Coppola's *The Cotton Club, Contact* and *The X-Files.* He also played God on *The Sara Silverman Show*.

His account begins while driving through the desert at night with a pilot friend from L.A. in late November of 1991. They were heading towards the tiny town of Rachel, Nevada, the last stop before Area 51. Their plan was to meet up with four friends, all of them UFO enthusiasts. It had been a long day, and it was getting late. There had been no sign of life for many miles on the lonely two-lane highway, and it was a challenge to stay alert. Tucker writes:

> Suddenly from out of the darkness, a winged figure appeared on my left and flew directly toward my windshield. At the last possible moment, it veered and flew over the roof of my car. It was huge...and I suddenly realized (as my heart retraced its steps) that it must have been an owl, with perhaps a five-foot wingspan. I was now very alert and remained that way.

This is the ancient totem of the owl. Tucker was on a path toward the unknown, seeking something—and then he was suddenly very alert. From my research, the owl seems to play the role of an alarm clock, telling the seeker to wake up and pay attention.

Not long after seeing the owl, they arrived atop a mesa just outside the ring of mountains encircling the mythic Area 51. His small team camped out that night on a hilltop within sight of the secret military base. They were hoping to see something that would confirm their suspicions. Tucker wrote:

> I awoke at 3:30 AM and exited the camper...and marveled at the clarity of the high mountain desert sky... I opened up a beach chaise lounge, slipped into a sleeping bag, lay back and surveyed the heavens.

> As if on cue, from within the circle of mountains a light slowly rose up and above the peaks...and hung there in the night. THE LIGHT was yellowish-white and its intensity and hue varied with its movement. It was perfectly silent throughout the experience. I cannot say what shape the craft had, I cannot define its size, I cannot assert that it was built by or occupied by a man... or something else. It was, for me, simply THE LIGHT.

Tucker goes on to describe the strange motions of this light in the sky. It seemed to float graceful and leisurely. Then he watched the commonly reported falling leaf movements as this light arched side to side like a heavy pendulum. He wrote that seeing this light, "...forever changed my belief systems."

The next night was cold and clear. Once again he took up vigil in his sleeping bag, looking up at the ocean of stars. He wrote:

> As I lay back remembering the names of the sharply defined constellations above, the sky was suddenly blotted out—the stars disappeared! And as I rose in fear, the sky reappeared, and I defined the shape (like a huge manta ray, cruising along the ocean floor) of a gliding, hunting owl. He'd passed perhaps five feet over my head and I watched him as he flew, 'nap of the earth' along the desert floor...and disappeared into the night.
>
> Now, I'd seen zero owls in forty years...and within twenty-four hours, I'd had close encounters with two. Presumably different owls—but who knows? As much as I enjoyed the coincidence, I thought little about it for some time thereafter. Until in my reading (which was prodigious afterwards, dozens of books) I discovered Jung's description of what are called 'screen memories.' They are a protective device of our minds when faced with anomalous or upsetting events. And apparently, for whatever reason, owls tend to be a rather common screen memory, particularly for other entities. But what they represented to me, I have yet to recall.

Tucker Smallwood begins a journey, he wants to see a UFO. He was seeking on the path (a lonely highway in Nevada) when he sees an owl, and is suddenly VERY alert. He sees a golden UFO that changes his belief systems. The next night, an owl blots out the stars. He then asked deeply personal questions of himself, and his place in this reality.

Maybe I am reading too much into this, but both his experiences and reactions parallel the core of my research. On the surface, there is an odd connection between owls and UFOs. But there is a deeper connection, one of personal transformation.

These excerpts are from Tucker's book *Return to Eden*. They come from the short chapter titled Dreamland, which begins on page 111, a prescient number indeed! The digital edition of his book was published on my 44th

birthday, August 22, 2006. This is the year I point to as the start of my awakening to my own experiences. Tucker makes this enticing statement in the foreword of his book:

> I've been told that the four words 'once upon a time', when read or heard create an altered state of consciousness. Let's see.[17]

Now that's something I can get behind!

Owls, driveways and laundry

Friday, October 11, 2013

A string of owl synchronicities emerged last week, and I'm still trying to make sense of the overlapping weirdness. Like any synch, things get so intertwined and personal that it ends up being almost impossible to convey their power, let alone their meaning. I've gotten to the point where the more entangled this stuff gets, the more I trust it. What follows is my attempt to unravel this knotted cluster of owl stuff. I've even included a chart.

Sun Sept 29	Mon Oct 1	Tues Oct 2	Wed Oct 3	Thurs Oct 10
Reiki therapist sees an owl.	Mike C has a Reiki session. Later that evening the therapist sees an owl.	Mike C hears his name mentioned on Micah's show, lotsa owl talk ensues.	Alan sees an owl in his driveway right after thinking about Mike C.	Mike C get an owl picture in the morning and later talks with Alan in the evening.

On Monday (September 30) I had a Reiki session with a woman I know here in my little town. At the end of our meeting, I asked her: "Have you seen any owls recently?"

She said, "Well, my boyfriend and I saw a great big owl last night, it was really incredible."

She explained about seeing a great horned owl that flew alongside her, from fence post to branch as she walked along a path. It would swoop down low and then land further down the path, staying ahead of them as they walked. It was huge, and it would glide low and incredibly close to the ground as it stayed in front of her and her friend.

I calmly told her, "*That was me. That owl was all about this, us here right now.*"

She agreed.

That evening, I received an email from her stating she had seen another

owl after our session. She wrote that there was a huge great gray owl in the same spot as the night before, and it "appeared" right in the moment when she thought to herself that she wanted to manifest an elephant.

I wanted to speak with her, but didn't call until the next day (Tuesday, October 1). Right before calling her, I switched on the live broadcast of Micah Hanks' *The Grailien Report.* The show was only on for a little bit, just enough for me to hear that Micah had two guests, Cam and Kyle from the *Expanded Perspectives Podcast*.

I turned off the audio, walked next door to do a load of laundry (I use my neighbor's washing machine), and when I got back to my house I made the call to the reiki therapist. I left a message on her machine, then switched the audio of the podcast back on.

The first thing I heard was Micah's voice excitedly declaring, "The gentleman you guys are talking about is… Mike Clelland of the Hidden Experience blog. So, someone needs to get him in the chatroom—we're talkin' about owls!"

I was at my desk, clicked on Skype and sent a little note, "Micah—I just started listening—and guess what I heard…"

Within seconds I was live on the air with him and his guests.

You could hear the amazement in their voices as they reveled in the fact that I'd heard my name, and was on the air so quickly. I felt like I'd hijacked the conversation for the remaining half hour of the show. One thing I talked about was an overtly mystical case in Asheville, North Carolina where Micah lives. He had a small role in a confusing set of weird synchronicities involving owls and UFOs.

I hadn't heard when my name had come up during the broadcast until this morning when I listened to the archived edition of the show from last night.

Cam told a very interesting owl story, it began at exactly at the 1:23:45 time count, a highly charged number for me. He said, "Now a little stranger than that, here's another story that my mother actually shared with me…" What follows is an extremely eerie sighting of a giant four and half foot tall owl seen in his mother's *driveway*.

Cam tells how he pressed his mother for details, because there's a guy who has a blog where he talks about owls and UFO abduction. He was obviously talking about me, but I hadn't heard this part live. Cam asked his mom to draw the owl, and she did a pencil sketch and said, "That's not quite

right.” And when she tried again, she drew what looked like a gray alien. This scared her and she refused to talk about it anymore.

Fast forward to yesterday, Thursday (October 10). I’d been at my desk all day, obsessively working on this owl book project. Early that evening, I received an email from Alan Green replying to a note I’d sent him on Monday (October 7) asking, “Are you up for a call?”

This was a bit unusual, I don’t think I’ve ever just asked him to chat like this, but I’ve always enjoyed our conversations. He replied, “let’s talk” and rang me up on Skype.

Right away he excitedly asked, “What did you think of that picture I sent you?”

I hadn’t received anything, and after a minute of searching he realized he’d made a mistake trying to send it, so he resent it as we talked.

Then he shared something from a week ago, Wednesday (October 2). It happened when returning from the laundromat, as he approached his home he was hit with a strong thought in his mind: “Mike Clelland—owls—owls—owls—Mike Clelland.”

He pulled in and there was a cute little owl on the driveway. He got out of his car and took a picture of it. He was close enough to see its big eyes dilate from the flash.

Alan takes this photo
in his driveway after
my name popped into his head

I recieved this owl image
via email from a stranger
the day I talk with Alan

Now that morning, Thursday (October 10) the first email in my inbox was a link to a close-up image of an owl. It was from someone who I didn't know, but had heard me on Greg Bishop's *Radio Mysterioso*. It was a cute owl image found online, and it weirdly matched Alan's experience—it was an owl on a driveway!

Alan and Micah both live in the same town, Asheville, North Carolina. They are both podcasters, bloggers, and authors. I've interviewed both of them, and there was a huge focus on synchronicities in these conversations.

Now, there is no better person on earth than Alan to try to unravel this kind of synchro-weirdness. The laundry connection seemed odd, and Alan pointed out that I'd my own powerful laundry sync where an "angel" gave me 75 cents. But weirder to me was the striking similarity of the two photos, each showing a cute owl in a driveway.

We both tried to untangle this weird knot of owl stuff, but all we ended up doing was seeing more and more little threads that seemed to lead

everywhere. No answers, just a recognition that this stuff really happens.

Divine owl alignment with Peter Manns

Wednesday, October 28, 2015

In early October I took part in a gathering hosted by Peter Manns, a fellow from Germany who does a form of healing called *Divine Alignment and Straightening*. The initial focus of the session was on the spine, but there's also a spiritual component.

The experience was extremely interesting, but the purpose of this post is to share a curious owl synchronicity. After the session, my partner Andrea and I invited Peter over to our home for dinner.

A few days later he arrived at our door just as the sun was setting. It was in the first few minutes of walking into the house that he asked what I do, and I said I'd been working on a book about owls. We were in the living room and I was facing him, and his back was to the big windows that look out onto the porch. He listened as I tried to give a brief idea of the focus of the book.

He said he had an owl story, and he told me about meeting a Native American medicine woman who gave him a psychic reading. She told Peter that he had an owl spirit as one of his totems. Then he held his hand a little above his head to show the height and position of an owl as if it were perched on his right shoulder. He said, "She saw the owl right here."

From where I was standing, Peter's hand was aligned with a carved totem pole on the porch behind him. From my eyes, the fingers of his hand were positioned *in an exact line with the owl at the top of the totem pole*.

I saw it immediately. His hand lined up with an owl on the totem pole, as he described his own owl totem.

When I told him this, he sort of shrugged it off as if he was used to these kinds of things. Then about two seconds later, he did a double take, and *really* looked at the totem pole on the porch. It was obvious he recognized that what had just happened was pretty interesting. He hadn't seen the owl totem pole until I'd pointed it out, just seconds after the divine alignment.

The totem pole was carved by a close friend of Andrea's grandfather. His name was Chief Dennis from the Abenaki tribe.

I just had a revelation

Saturday, August 6, 2016

> I just had a revelation while driving home as I pulled up in the driveway an owl flew across my path. What does that mean?
> —08/02/16 7:50 p.m.

I received a text from my sister Jeanne on a Tuesday evening in August, but didn't see it until the next day.

When I finally saw the message, I called her right away. She explained that her mind had been in turmoil while driving the night before—her three kids had all moved out, and she was struggling with what to do in this new chapter of her life. She was listening to an NPR story about working with the elderly as she arrived at her house. This was something she'd done for a few years out of college, and she'd recently volunteered at a local assisted living facility where our aging parents had been living.

Her car was stopped in the driveway as she listened to the conclusion of the radio report, when she was hit with a sudden revelation—she realized she needed to be working with the elderly!

At that instant, an owl swooped down in front of her windshield and landed on a nearby tree. She watched it for awhile before it flew off, and sent me the text right at that moment.

It was the following day when she told me this story over the phone. I asked if she'd ever seen owls around her house and she said no, this was the first owl she'd ever seen near her home after living there for over 23 years.

She asked me, "What does it mean?" I told her she didn't need me to answer that, and she agreed.

Also of note:

The night of my sister's owl sighting, Andrea and I were sitting together at the dining room table. We were just about to start dinner when I saw a big

bird fly low across the lawn just outside the window. It was a brownish gray, and had a thick body; my immediate thought was that it was an owl. We both ran outside and looked around the trees to see if it might have landed. While we were looking, our next door neighbor hurried toward us and asked if we had seen a big bird. She had just heard something loud hit her picture window, and by the noise she could tell it was large.

After that we all looked around the trees hoping to see an owl, but never saw anything. This would have been about eight in the evening, closely matching the time stamp on the text from my sister.

Text added on April 2018:

Something worth noting; there is a pattern within this research, and it fits here. Many of the people who contact me with their owl experiences seem to be doing work to help people. And, I think it's appropriate to note that out next door neighbor who ran out of her house after hearing the loud thud on her window, is an elderly woman.

Owl image in blood

Thursday, December 14, 2017

close-up of the blood stain on the side of my book, alongside the book cover

I met Peter Schenk a little over a month ago at a local retreat center, while helping my partner Andrea who was performing a sound bath during a weekend event. Peter was one of the speakers, and when he talked with Andrea she mentioned my owl research.

He had never heard of any connection between owls and UFOs, but suddenly remembered he had seen an owl the night he'd experienced a missing time event.

He later told me that he'd seen a massive white owl while walking out to his mailbox at night. He said, "It didn't look artificial, but it didn't seem real."

Later that same night he remembers being taken from his bed, and returned with no memory of what happened.

Peter works as a psychic intuitive and healer, and can offer insights into

other people’s experiences, but he can’t figure out what happened to himself that night.

He was surprised that he’d completely forgotten he’d seen that owl—the memory resurfaced when Andrea mentioned my research. Also of note; the owl sighting happened at the mailbox, a source of receiving messages. I mailed Peter a book a few days after we met.

Yesterday morning, I received a photo from him showing a blood stain on the side of my book *The Messengers*.

Peter had cut his finger the same day the book arrived. He had put a band-aid on the cut, but it was still bleeding enough that he got some blood on the book. It wasn’t until yesterday that he realized the small spot of blood looked curiously like an owl, specifically the owl on the cover of the book.

I’m at the point now where this kind of thing should be pretty normal, but this one packed a whammy. I mean, *the blood of a psychic healer appears as a tiny owl on my book!*

Peter’s website describes him as, “A spiritual visionary who left a successful career as a computer programmer for one of the world’s largest banks, to fulfill his mission to heal the world.”

Owl and hawk in Phoenix

Thursday, March 23, 2017

There were a powerful series of photos posted by Jujuolui Kuita on her Facebook wall. She's an emergency animal tech, and was called out to a location in suburban Phoenix because of a report of an "injured owl." When she arrived on the scene there was something up in a tree, but it was initially hard to make out what it might be.

Eventually Jujuolui saw the face of a great horned owl peering out from a tangle of wings. She was unclear of what she was seeing, but it seemed there was more than just an owl stuck up in that tree. She went and got a ladder from the truck, and propped it against the tree. The motion of the ladder bumping the branches must have startled the owl, and it freed itself from under a dead hawk. Before she had aligned the ladder, the lifeless hawk was falling.

The pictures and captions tell a sad and mythic story.

For this ebook, there will be full frame photos over the next few pages. Double click on any image for a larger view.

1. Something doesn't look right here!
Wait, there are more than two wings here!!!
That looks like a red tail!??

2. An owl face in among the wings

3. Just set the ladder, suddenly,
the red-tailed hawk came falling down!

4. The dead hawk now on the ground.

5. Without the weight of the hawk on him, the owl was able to fly away, and found safety in another tree.

6. Jujuolui holding the dead hawk

7. Female red-tailed way up at the top in a nearby tree, with her mate on the ground below her.
Jujuoli labeled this photo: "Sorry for your loss."

Jujuolui was terribly saddened that this big beautiful hawk had died. What made this even more upsetting was that there was another hawk perched high in a nearby tree. This second hawk seemed distressed, and was watching everything that was happening below. She realized this was probably the female mate to the dead male hawk on the ground.

She contacted *Wild at Heart*, an Arizona-based raptor rescue center, and explained what had happened. They suggested that she leave the body of the hawk under the tree so the female could realize he had died and begin the grieving process. She labeled the photo: “Sorry for your loss.”

Jujuolui told me she cried at the base of that tree, “It was really sad. I felt the intense pain of the female hawk.”

~ ~ ~

Something happened in that tree. There had been a battle between an owl and a hawk, but *why* they fought no one will ever know. Perhaps one bird had gotten into the other’s territory. Maybe the owl was attempting to take over the nest of the hawk.

Why were they stuck together? It seems that the weight of the dead hawk had pinned the owl into the branches. Could the fight have left the owl injured? Or, maybe it was left too exhausted to free itself from the hawk it had killed. Perhaps their talons ended up locked together. Whatever the cause, Jujuolui was allowed a rare glimpse into animal behavior.

But what’s even more fascinating is that Jujuolui is a lifelong experiencer of UFO contact, and some of these events have involved owls. There is a powerful symbolic aspect to this story. It’s not only what happened with the owl and hawk, but that someone with UFO experiences would be “called” to that tree.

She was well aware of the significance, and said so in the comment thread below her own photos. She wrote: “I felt there was some omen to this… I felt like just a spectator,” and, “I think there is much symbolism to this event!”

Jujuolui confronted two raptors, both imbued with ancient lore, one a symbol of the night and the other the day. One represents the mysteries of death, the other the power of life. The owl is an inward totem, representing

the secrets of the unseen worlds. The hawk is an outward totem, a bold emblem of strength and courage. The owl was victorious, yet pinned down by the weight of the defeated. And it was a UFO experiencer, someone who has crossed the boundaries between the worlds who freed it from the burden of its shadow spirit. She used a ladder to free the owl, and in dream symbolism the ladder could be seen as spiritual ascension, or climbing to a higher level of self discovery.

Another thing that struck me was this happened in Phoenix, a city named after a mythic bird, the symbol of death in flames and rebirth from the ashes. When I pointed this out to her she said, “I know, how fascinating! I was told in a ‘dream’ that I was to move to this city. It was after everything I owned burned up!”

I contacted her and asked some questions, the first being the same I would ask anyone: “What was going on in your life leading up to this event?”

She replied that her life at the time had been extremely difficult, and had been feeling hopeless and depressed. I had initially edited these personal details out of the first draft of this post, but she said, “I don’t mind you sharing that. It’s true and it might give hope to others who are in need of looking inward for strength and guidance.”

Her dog Katrina had recently died, and she was grieving over the loss of her best friend and companion. Jujuolui is extremely empathic, and her animal rescue work can be emotionally challenging. One of the patterns I have seen in this research is that people who’ve had these contact experiences often work with animals—that, and a profound sense of empathy.

The night before the owl and hawk event, she had asked for help. Just before going to bed, she sought guidance from her star-family (including Katrina) on three problems. She said, “My dream the next morning was my guides telling me they had solved two out of the three issues I have asked for help on! But I don’t know which issues they were! Ha!”

I explained that all this felt like something symbolic, and it might only be understood at the unconscious level of the archetype. She replied, “I knew it meant something, and I felt honored to be a part of this event. It was very sad.”

She was clear that what happened was definitely a “pay attention” moment.

Jujuolui has been outspoken about her experiences, and is the subject of

full chapter in the recent book *Meet the Hybrids* by Barbara Lamb and Miguel Mendonça. She also published her own book in 2012, *We Are Among You Already*.

Another of her stories is featured on page 211 in *The Messengers*, and it's also posted on the blog (linked here). Like the owl and the hawk account here, this one also features a photograph of a great horned owl. She awoke one night to the sounds of a hooting owl. Her initial thought was that this wasn't an owl, but an alien being on her roof making noise. She was compelled to get out of bed, go outside and take a picture of what she assumed was a gray alien. It felt as if she was being *told* to point her camera in the darkness. She took a picture, and when she looked at the image on the back of her digital camera, the flash had captured a big owl perched on the corner of the roof. That owl was positioned directly above her bed.

Owls and wilderness

Sunday, April 27, 2014

I just spent 20 days as a guide in the Utah desert. I was teaching lightweight backpacking skills in the Escalante region of the Grand Staircase National Monument. This is one of the most magnificent, inspiring, jaw-dropping places on Earth.

Three weeks ago, I woke to the hooting of a lone owl out my window. This happened before dawn on the morning I began my drive from Idaho to southern Utah.

During all my time in the wilderness I never once slept in a tent, instead I would simply lie out under the stars. I heard owls almost every night.

On one of the nights I had found a glorious site up on a hill that looked down at a bend in the river. I was alone—my teammates were all down on the sandy river bottom.

Before lying down to sleep, I sat up in my sleeping bag and spent a few minutes taking in the surroundings. While peering out into the darkness, I saw a white owl zip past me in the glow of my headlamp. It was silent and close.

That same night I woke to an owl in the branches right above me. I laid there and listened to the repeating call of a western screech-owl.

Right now I’m tired, creaky, sunburned and deeply alive. There is a heartfelt and rejuvenating value to spending time in wild places.

“Mom, is that you?”

Monday, February 20, 2017

barred owl on the back deck

Last Friday morning at 8:35, Andrea had a photo of an owl show up in her Facebook chat box. The text under the image asked, “Andrea, this owl is on my deck. Do you think it might be injured?”

The message was from Andrea’s friend Suzanne. I was sitting nearby and she showed me the picture. My sense was that it looked fine. Andrea replied and asked when it had shown up.

What then took place was a real time back and forth dialogue about the owl as it sat perched right out her window. Suzanne told us over Facebook that her mother had recently died, and that: “Today is my Mom’s birthday.”

Suzanne had been crying earlier that morning, still grieving over the loss.

Her mom had always been a good listener, and she desperately wanted to talk to her. She sat down and took some time to meditate after crying. Her intention was to process her feelings of confusion and loss. She came out of meditation, slowly opened her eyes—and saw the owl.

She remarked that the way the window was lined up, she would not have seen it if she had been seated even just a few inches off to either side. Her immediate thought was, "*Mom, is that you?*"

She got up, walked to the window and tapped on the glass. The owl slowly turned its head, its eyes wide open and staring at her. It was at this point that she took the photo (above) and sent it to Andrea.

Suzanne wrote, "So gorgeous… I've never seen one so close."

I was getting the play-by-play as Andrea read each incoming message. When I heard that Suzanne's mother had recently died, I immediately blurted out, "Talk to the owl as if it's your Mom."

My comment was because of all the accounts I've collected of people talking to owls after a loved one had passed (most often a parent).

Suzanne couldn't get out onto the back deck because of deep snow, so she opened a nearby window. "It looked at me for several minutes with those eyes, and then flew into a tree. It has to be her."

The owl sat on the deck chair for about an hour, then spent about five minutes in a pine tree close to the house. She said this short time felt endless.

In a follow up phone conversation, I asked Suzanne her thoughts on the owl. She said that before noticing the owl, she felt alone and despondent. Since the sighting, "I just felt an amazing connection, I don't feel alone."

She saw the owl in the morning and for the rest of that day, she felt like crying, "It was so moving, but I wasn't grieving. The tears are not of despair."

Suzanne had lived in that house for over eight years, and had never once seen an owl. Her mom would have been 95 years old on the day of this owl sighting, February 17, 2017. If you leave out the zero, the calendar date repeats itself in the year, 2/17 is 2017.

Suzanne is a psychotherapist, and like so many of the other people who've described similar owl experiences, she's also trained in reiki.

A few days after the owl sighting on her back deck, Suzanne said this, "I am convinced that the visit was also a message to me to take care of business. The business of letting go... and to commit to my work and my purpose here.

Even if it means facing down the loneliness for the time being. But I am not alone. The owl did not seem to leave the yard. I believe it is still around my home.”

16

THE CONFIRMATION EVENT

The path to knowledge is a forced one. In order to learn, we must be pushed. On the path of knowledge we are always fighting something, avoiding something, preparing for something; and that something is always inexplicable, greater and more powerful than us.

—Carlos Castaneda

This story changed my life.

I was writing and posting as it was unfolding, trying to fit the puzzle pieces together, and also publicly processing my frenetic emotions. Hopefully you'll get a sense of the intensity of what was happening. It's right there in my written words, all of it showing up online in real time.

This set of experiences took 22 pages to tell in *The Messengers*, and there's a lot of overlap in the chapter that follows. This story is terribly important to me, and it's covered here in a way that includes most of the outlying details.

Sleeping out under the stars in southern Utah

Tuesday, March 12, 2013 (12:34 p.m.)

What I'm sharing here might be nothing, but I've made a pledge to post anything odd on this blog, so here goes.

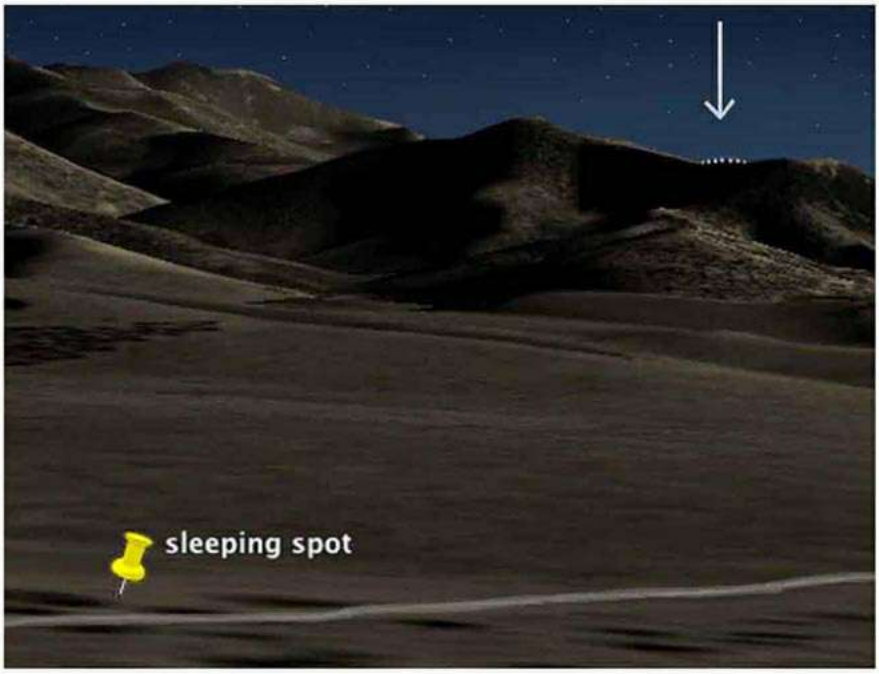
I've just returned home after two weeks away. I spent most of that time at a UFO conference near Phoenix, and on my way back home I visited friends in Sedona and Flagstaff.

I've spent a lot of time driving around the western United States, and I love the wide open spaces. On these road trips I'll do anything to avoid getting a hotel room—instead, I'll simply sleep out under the stars. This is what I did on Sunday night, March 10th.

I slept alongside Utah Highway 20, just a few miles east of I-15.

I pulled off onto a dirt road at around 9:00 p.m., and although this was a desolate spot, there was another car there. It was a Jeep, and I could see people moving around inside with flashlights. I didn't want to bother them, so I drove past them and parked at the far end of the area. I got out, walked around a with my headlamp and stretched my legs—this was a perfect place to sleep out. The site had low bushy junipers, and a series of beaten down roads with a few little turnouts. There was some litter and old campfire rings—plenty of people had been here before. It was a cold Sunday night, so I wasn't really worried about anyone else pulling in. I laid my pad down in the dirt near my little Subaru, then climbed into my big winter sleeping bag. It was absolutely still, and the stars were glorious. I love lying out like this, and eventually drifted off to sleep.

What I saw throughout the night from where I slept



Google map image looking South,
the arrow shows the location of the structure

At some point during the night I woke up, probably around midnight. I was on my back, and calmly took in the beauty of the crystal clear sky—this is why I love sleeping out. I looked at the ridge line of rounded peaks to the south, and saw what appeared to be a large cylinder shaped structure perched on top of a hill. My first impression was that it was a big, round building with a row of lights situated along its outer circumference.

Right in that moment, I wondered if this was a landed flying saucer. I mean, that's *exactly* what it looked like. I thought to myself, if this really was a flying saucer I should feel something, so I laid still and stared at it for a few minutes. I tried to tap into some deep intuitive part of myself, hoping to pick up on any alien vibrations (I'm not joking, I really tried). There was no sense of anything odd, everything seemed fine. After awhile, I rolled over and went back to sleep.

I woke up again to a pair of coyotes howling somewhere nearby, and one seemed extremely close. I sat up and looked around, but all I could see was sagebrush.

I've spent half my life out west, and slept out in a lot of places just like this. I've heard a lot of coyotes, but I'd never heard one that close and that loud. It was amazing, and I felt blessed. I looked back up to the round structure on the hillside and nothing had changed—it still looked the same, and I had the same neutral feeling. I listened to the howling for awhile, then rolled over and went back to sleep.

I woke again, and saw a bright light near where I was laying. It was on the other side of some low bushy trees. My first impression was that someone had parked nearby, and I was seeing a light from a car. I sat up and tried to peer through the bushes, but the light was mostly obscured so I moved my head from side to side to try and get a better view. I couldn't see much, but it didn't seem like anything unusual. My thought was that someone had pulled in while I was asleep and parked a short distance away. I assumed they were doing the same thing I was, stopping to sleep in a quiet spot during a long drive. Yet what I saw didn't seem like headlights or a flashlight.

I again looked up at the big round thing on the hilltop, and saw something I hadn't noticed before. It wasn't much, just a tiny dot of light off to the left of the structure. The house I grew up in had a single light on a post out on the

front lawn, and that's what it reminded of, like someone up there had turned on the lawn light. After a little while, I went back to sleep.

I woke up again sometime later, and the light through the bushes was gone. Despite waking a few times I'd slept well, and although it was still dark, I decided to get up. There was still a long drive ahead, and I felt rested enough to finish the trip. I packed up my sleeping gear and drank the last sip of yesterday's cold coffee from my travel mug.

I wondered about the light I'd seen, and walked around to the other side of the bushes. I thought I might find a car, yet there was nothing but an empty dirt road. The way I remembered it, the light seemed like it would have been across the road and off in the sagebrush. This was an improbable place for someone to park, or even stand, but I didn't think much of it.

On one level everything seemed normal, but I was aware of an odd thought—I wondered if I might've been taken during the night, and I couldn't shake the feeling.

I tossed everything in the car and started driving. I'm not sure if I looked up to see the round structure on the hill before leaving—I probably did, but I don't have any memory of seeing it before driving off.

I enjoy being on the road in the early morning when the traffic is minimal. If I remember correctly, it was a little before 4:00 a.m. This was confusing, because that was the night of the switchover to daylight savings time, and I hadn't yet changed the clock in my car. My flip phone had changed automatically, so it might have been a bit before 5:00 a.m., but I'm not sure. The mixed up time added to my worries about being taken.

I didn't dwell on anything about the night during the long drive north to Idaho. I got home in the afternoon, and immediately checked Google Maps to look for that big round structure on the hilltop. I quickly found the exact location of my sleeping spot, but couldn't find anything on the satellite images that would match the circular building.

I'm skilled with maps, and feel strongly that I'd pinpointed the exact location of the round structure— *but there was nothing there*. This thing was 1.6 miles away from where I'd slept, so it must have been enormous.

I checked the satellite imagery on Google Maps and it was dated 2011. Perhaps the structure had been built since then, and simply wasn't yet available on the map. Maybe it will show up when the satellite imagery is updated.

It may not have been a house and could have been an array of cell towers, or something similar arranged in a circle. It might have been a water tank, but that's unlikely at that location, and I doubt it would be lit up at night.

I thought it might be a house because the ring of lights around the structure seemed like windows, yet these lights were spaced at slightly irregular intervals. I remember thinking if this really was a landed flying saucer, the lights around its edge should be tidy and perfect, but they weren't.

This post might be an insight into my own paranoia or it might be something more, but I am sharing it here to simply document what happened.

The Sleeping Spot (exact)
lat/long: 38° 3' 29.2716" N, 112° 39' 17.1612" W

The Round Structure (approx.)
lat/long: 38° 2' 7.4652" N, 112° 39' 24.0084" W

A couple of odd little extras:

I had driven that stretch of Route 20 years before, and remembered it was very pretty. What's curious is that I knew I'd be sleeping there. Even though I'd never been to that turnout alongside the highway, I left Flagstaff in the morning with a clear knowing that's where I'd end up.

Also…

Earlier in the post I mentioned there was a Jeep parked in the same dusty site along Highway 20. It was a white Jeep Cherokee with Wyoming license plates with the prefix "10," for Fremont County. I have a lot of friends in that low population county, and they're the exactly the outdoorsy types that would travel to the desert in the spring after a long winter in the mountains. I figured anyone from there parked in that spot at that time of the year would probably be my friend, or at least an acquaintance.

The jeep was still there when I drove away early the next morning.

Text added the same day:

This was posted at 12:34 p.m., and this just screams at me to pay attention! While this number might not seem like much, it's the kind of synchronistic clue that makes this stuff really hard for me to deny.

Line on a map across Southern Utah

Tuesday, March 12, 2013 (10:55 p.m.)

Psychic flash seen in my mind's eye

I'm sorta freaked out. I just created this map. I did it in a sort of crazed intuitive flurry. Before I even started, I absolutely knew what would appear. The yellow line connects three deeply personal sights in southern Utah. This is entangled with the post I wrote this morning.

The GREEN pin (on the west end) marks the location of the round structure seen from my sleeping bag two nights ago.

The RED pin (in the middle) marks the site where Natascha and I slept along the Burr Trail Road. That night she took a walk in the starlight while I stayed in my sleeping bag. She saw a bright white orb while I listened to the hooting of a great horned owl.

The BLUE pin (on the east end) is pretty much the most profound abduction type experience I've ever (consciously) experienced. Natasha and I both had an irrational sense of fear in a tent near Dolores, Colorado. That

same night, I felt as if I was floating out of the roof of the tent and into a white realm. I asked, “Am I on a table?” and the next day I had a long scratch across my chest.

These three locations are each positioned EXACTLY along a 231 mile long straight line, and it cuts right through where I had been lying in the sand listening to an owl! The message to me is clear—something happened on Sunday night under the stars. Needless to say, *this is some freaky shit!*

Exact sleeping spot, March 10th 2011

The weird impulse to create this map:

About an hour ago I experienced *a very clear knowing* that these locations would line up perfectly. It didn’t come in a verbal set of instructions. Instead I was suddenly aware of the full image, and how it looked (and all fit together) in one instant of absolute *knowing*. I was standing near my desk when it happened, so I just sat at the computer, opened Google Maps and did it.

At first it was a little off. I was using my sleeping location from two nights ago as the western most point of the yellow line. The location of the orb and owl event in the middle was about 200 feet off from perfect. Then I moved the western most point about 1.6 miles to the south, to the site of the circular structure on the hilltop and when I did this—everything lined up with an eerie

exact perfection.

I am reliving the same weird sense of profound knowing from 2010. This also involved putting lines on a map, that story culminated in a series of posts about a giant triangle pointing to Byron, North Dakota.

This sense of *absolute knowing* can only be called a very clear psychic download.

Text added March 15, 2013:

Last night I received a note from Natascha. She told me March 10th is her birthday, and this is the date of the Sunday night event when I was sleeping outside in Utah! She was with me, and experienced both the middle and eastern events on the map. These were by far the scarier experiences than what happened last Sunday.

And…

On March 10th, 2010 I posted the very first essay about a giant triangle on a map**.** This dealt with the map weirdness that connected Mac Tonnies, Byron, North Dakota and owls. This was *exactly three years to the day* before I laid down under the starts in Utah.

Text added March 10, 2019:

I'm adding a little bit more during the final editing. I've read and re-read these posts over the years, and need to clarify the actual timeline of events. Also, it was only as I typed the date above that I noticed the coincidence.

> **Sunday, March 10, 2013 —** At about 9 p.m. I pulled into the turnout to sleep under the stars in southern Utah. This is when I saw the round structure on the hill.
>
> **Monday, March 11, 2013 —** The first part of the day was spent driving north from Utah to my home in Idaho. When I arrived home, the first thing I did was get on my computer to try and find any satellite imagery of the round structure. I also did a photoshop illustration of what I saw from my sleeping spot. I was totally obsessed, and this frenzied mood defined the next few days.
>
> **Tuesday, March 12, 2013 —** At 12:34 in the afternoon, I added the

story on my blog with the illustrations. At about 3 p.m. I spoke with the Utah state director for MUFON, and asked if there had been any reports from two nights earlier. He said no, but added there have been a lot of sighting reports in that area. Shortly after hanging up, I was standing by my desk and was hit with a psychic vision of the line on the map. I stayed up late that night connecting lines and trying to make sense of this second part of the story, then posted a follow-up report at 10:55 p.m.

I now know

Friday, March 22, 2013

Anyone who's followed my stuff, whether written or spoken, will know that I can drone on and on about the existential angst of *not knowing*. This has been a sort of mantra, an endless tape loop where I repeat that I am NOT sure if I am truly an alien abductee.

I feel like I've been in a place of actually knowing for awhile now (maybe years), but my incessant "maybe" had become a habit—or more a role I was playing.

Well, this last event (March 10th) changed all that—it wasn't the night under the stars, it was the follow up weirdness with the map. The precision of that yellow line and how it exactly connected three very telling events, including one with a hooting owl, was just too revealing. It simply screamed at me, *this shit is real!*

I am now unable to cling to that former identity of "not" knowing. I now *know*. I am directly intertwined with the UFO reality.

I hate the term *abductee*, and all its baggage. That title is way too simplistic, but it's probably the best term to define what's been going on in my life. I am convinced that at the source of this mystery there is something far more complex and far more bizarre than we dare imagine. The terms abductee, experiencer and contactee are inadequate, and all seem flat in the face of this elaborate puzzle.

But the knowing remains.

Peace,
Mike Clelland

March 22 2013

~ ~ ~

This was an important post and it generated a lot of comments, here's an excerpt from one of them:

Anya Briggs said:
Oh, Jesus God, thank you for FINALLY admitting this. I'm literally breathing a sigh of relief as I read this. Now you can finally heal. The only way you reach any conclusion about trauma is first ADMITTING that it's actually happened… This is a great opportunity to get creative and have ownership of your now not so hidden experience.

Blessings,
Anya

March 22, 2013

One year ago today

Monday, March 10, 2014

location of the rounds structure,
photo taken from the sleeping spot one year later

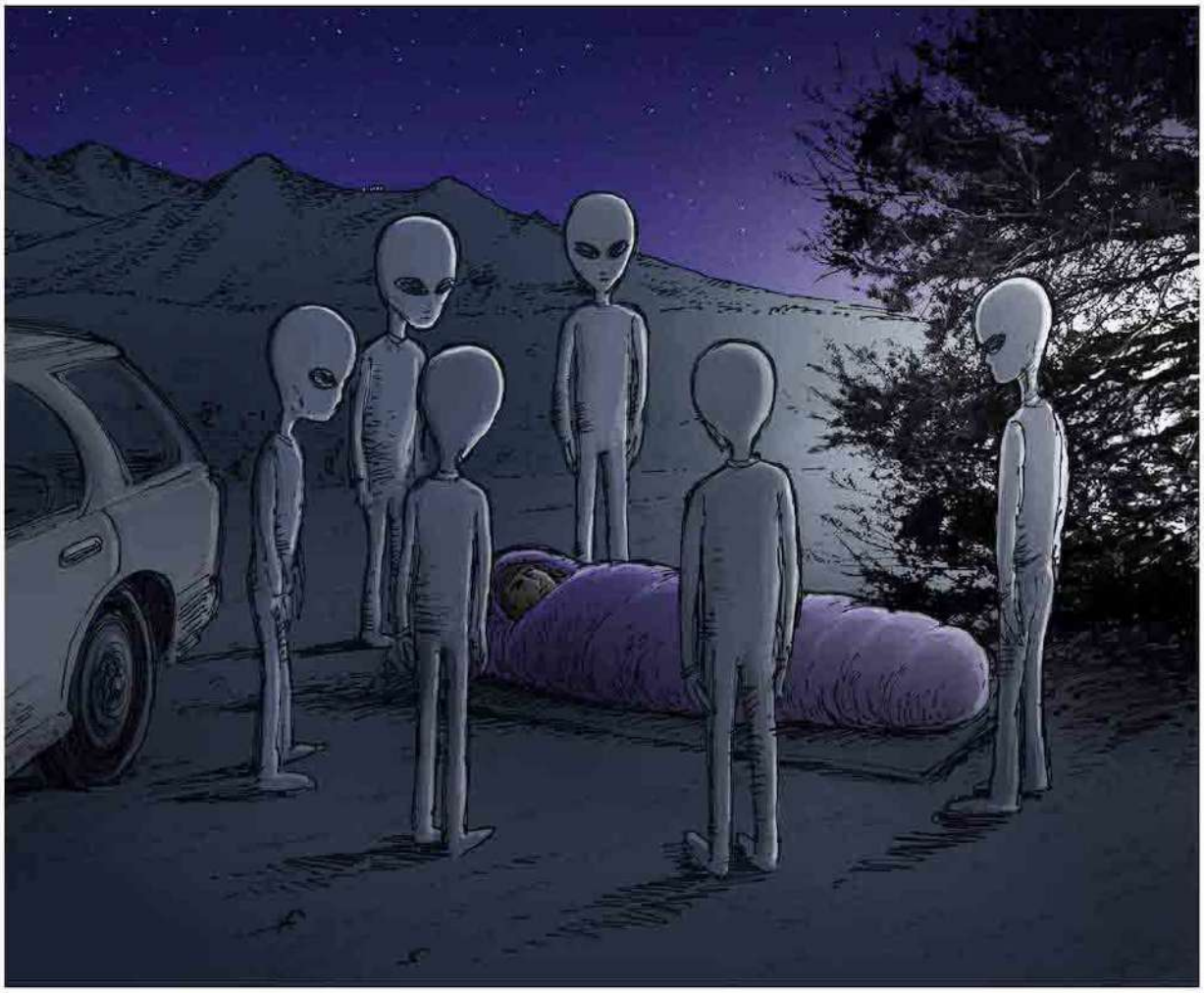
It was exactly one year ago today when I set my sleeping pad down on the dirt in a muddy turn off along highway 20 in southern Utah. I climbed into my thick winter sleeping bag, and slept under the glorious stars on that clear desert night. The events of that night changed my life. I refer to this, quite accurately, as my confirmation event.

Also, just a few weeks ago I drove past this site on the way to the annual UFO conference in Arizona. I pulled off I-15, and returned to the exact same spot along highway 20. I was confirming what I already knew, that there was no round structure on top of that hill.

During my drive home from the conference, I retraced my route exactly as I had done the year before. I slept in the same turnoff where I'd seen the round structure on the hill. I laid my sleeping pad down on the exact same spot on the ground. Nothing happened, except for a deep sense of contentment from sleeping under the stars.

Hemi-sync vision

Thursday, July 23, 2015



A clear momentary vision during meditation, 2014

I will occasionally meditate, and sometimes I'll listen to a guided meditation on my iPod. I like a series of audio tracks from Robert Monroe, the author of *Journeys out of the Body* (1971), a first person account of out of body travel. He started a research facility, The Monroe Institute, with the mission of exploring human consciousness.

He also pioneered a meditation technique using recorded audio called hemispheric synchronization. The process requires headphones, and a slightly different tone plays in each ear. To the listener, this sounds like nothing more

than a calm humming. Monroe felt that this system synchronizes the two hemispheres of the brain in a way that helps beginners more quickly achieve a meditative state. It's also said that these sounds have the potential to evoke an altered state of consciousness.

I was alone in my living room the fall of 2014, sitting on my little homemade meditation stool. My eyes were closed as I listened to Robert Monroe's steady voice describe some simple focusing techniques, while the low hum of the hemi-sync audio played in the background.

I was calm and following his narration, and at some point he said:

> Here is a simple way to remember any part of your life experience… Close your physical eyes and touch the fingers of your right hand gently to the center of your forehead. When you do this you will recall and remember immediately that which you consciously desire to remember…
>
> (short excerpt of the audio track is linked here)

Everything was so peaceful that I didn't think much about what he was saying, so there were no expectations when I touched my forehead. At the instant my fingertips made contact, I saw myself lying on the ground surrounded by five or six spindly aliens. This image was only in my mind's eye for a single second, but it was unmistakably vivid. I knew what I was seeing—it was a single snap-shot from the night of March 10th, 2013. (see illustration)

I wasn't at all surprised to see this, it felt like I'd been offered a gentle clue from some higher part of myself. The beings in the vision appeared to be dressed in something tight fitting and white, and seemed taller than what would be the typical gray aliens. I was motionless in my sleeping bag at their feet. This scene in the Utah desert was presented without any fear or anxiety —as if to reassure me.

Curiously, these Robert Monroe audio files were sent to me from a friend with a dramatic account of seeing both an owl and UFO while out in the desert at night, and his story is featured on page 18 in *The Messengers*.

The momentary vision was clear—it was me on the ground surrounded by aliens. I recognize how seductive it would be to surrender to that image, to see it as literal truth. Maybe it's exactly what happened, or maybe it's one more in a long chain of symbolic clues.

Text added July 24, 2015:

I honestly have no idea how much to trust this image. Real, or not real? I'm dealing with all kinds of pressure (all my own and self-imposed) to dismiss the imagery as confabulation. And at the same time I'm feeling another pressure to say it really happened—really, truly, literally happened. I'm holding both these thoughts in my head, without knowing which one might be real.

The 37th Parallel and the mainstream

Wednesday, December 28, 2016

Mainstream author Ben Mezrich published *The 37th Parallel: The Secret Truth Behind America's UFO Highway* in 2016. The book follows Colorado investigator Chuck Zukowski through his research on UFOs and cattle mutilations. Chuck discovered a long list of bizarre incidences and sightings clustered along the 37th line of latitude, what he terms the "UFO Highway."

The cover of the book shows a map of the United States with a stripe of dots running east to west. My first thought was that my confirmation event seemed to line up with those dots.

I checked, and of my three events two are on the 37th parallel, and the third is just tipping up in the 38th. The location of my March 10th event is 2.2 miles north of the 37th parallel.

I sent this info and the latitude and longitude of each of the three events to Chuck, and he replied, "Thank you Mike. Really, the 37th is the center line of the highway with the 36 being the right lane, and the 38th being the left lane. Pretty interesting."

I haven't read the book yet, so I can't really speak to Chuck's ideas, but I've certainly had strange experiences on, or very near that line.

The book by Mezrich has received mixed reviews within the UFO community, many commenting that it reads like an introduction to the subject. But what's intriguing is that it seems to be selling very well, with a strong publicity push from the publisher. Several of his other books were turned into major movies, and there are rumors that this book is being fast tracked to Hollywood.

More real than real

April 2012

The unseen coyote from my night alone in the desert was so loud and so close that I can't understand why I didn't see it. I can say the same thing about the unseen owl the night Natascha saw the floating orb. I've since wondered if the sounds I heard those nights, the yapping coyote and the hooting owl, could have been some sort of orchestrated screen experience.

Their calls were insistent and vividly real—*more real than real*—and both times I was euphoric to hear something so wild and perfect. Right in the moment, I was perfectly aware I was listening to something mythical.

These were totem animals screaming for my attention, calling to the stars to make themselves known. The owl and coyote are archetypes—they are symbols, and both of them, quite literally, *woke me up!*

I've spent years trying to untangle the meaning of these experiences. Reality itself was acting as a metaphor, and it must have happened for some reason. I was presented with three points on a map seen in a psychic vision, and each event was punctuated by a mythic symbol—a coyote, an owl, and a ceremony of death and rebirth in a Navajo sweat lodge.

17

AFTER THE CONFIRMATION EVENT

We are all future butterflies who think, wrongly, that we are just slugs. And we are evolving, whether we admit it or not, into something else. Something with wings.

—Jeffrey J. Kripal, *Mutants and Mystics*

Everything changed after the confirmation event. Everything.

I am a different person now. I'd been presented with something deeply personal. It felt like all the overlapping details surrounding the night of March 10th were set in my path for a reason.

I love howling coyotes and hooting owls. I love sleeping out under the stars, creating maps, and traveling through wide open spaces. All these things fill a spiritual need in me. I cannot state this strongly enough. I was presented with a set of clues that only I could solve. I was given a psychic vision of three points along a straight yellow line, *with an owl right in the center*. This complex set of events was carefully orchestrated for me, and me alone.

I had spent years with an endless tape loop grinding away in my head, repeating *these things can't happen*. Yet they were happening, and I finally saw it with a clarity that could not be denied. I had been stuck, and now I could finally move forward.

Immediately after the confirmation event, I began work on a magazine style essay. This was posted in July of 2013, and was titled *Owls and the UFO Abductee*.

Author Nick Redfern read that essay, and he told me it needed to be a book. He was saying something I already knew, and the next two and a half years were focused on that book.

My priorities had shifted and I wasn't posting much on the blog, and my

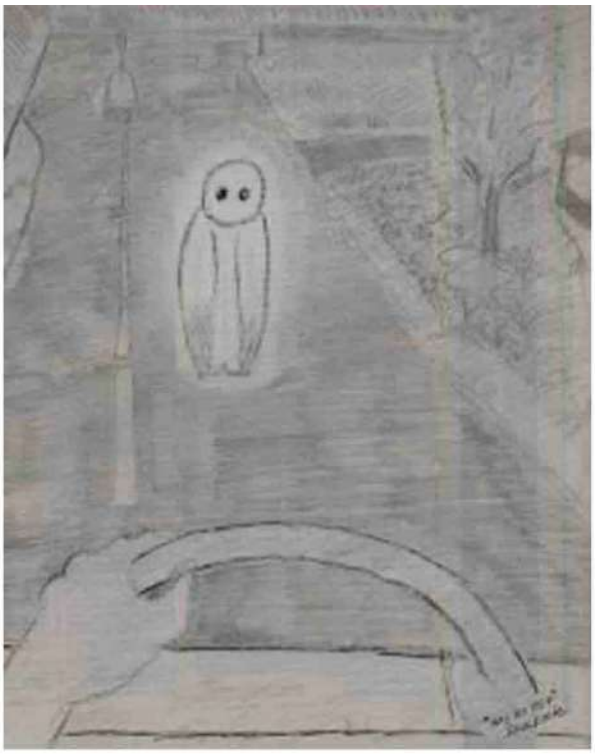
podcasts came to a standstill.

In February, 2014 I gave a presentation at the annual International UFO Congress in Arizona. This is one of the largest UFO conferences in the world, and it was a huge deal for me to stand on that stage and share my journey. Later that summer, I crossed the ocean and gave a similar presentation in Leeds, England.

Talking at conferences and writing books might seem like a next step in a career path, but it was more than that—I was no longer stuck.

Four foot tall owls and an emerald green light body

Thursday, November 12, 2015



large owl seen in the road, 1987

Shortly after stepping off the stage from my first ever UFO presentation, a soft spoken man introduced himself and his wife to me. Their names were Rick and Maritza, and the three of us sat together at a table outside the convention center on a pleasant evening in Arizona.

We had a lovely discussion as the sun was setting. His wife explained that Rick had jolted in his seat during my presentation, it happened the moment I showed a slide of a four foot tall cardboard owl set in front of my car on a road at night. I staged that picture near my home to give a visual example of what commonly gets reported.

I sensed a shakiness as they took turns trying to describe what had happened. They seemed uneasy, and I tried to make them feel more comfortable by listening carefully.

Rick told Maritza that he'd seen an unusually tall owl from his car—he even drew a picture shortly after the event in 1987 (seen above). His story

was so strange that she was never quite able to believe him, but that abruptly changed when Rick flinched during my presentation—seeing his emotional reaction, Maritza finally believed her husband.

Over a year later, Rick contacted me about something else that happened while I was on stage. Here's an excerpt from his excellent blog posting (linked here) describing the first part of his experience:

> During the lecture, Clelland posted an image made from the perspective behind a steering wheel looking, over the hood of a car, at a large owl standing in the middle of the road, identical in perspective to a drawing that I had sketched shortly after the incident with the owl during the rainstorm in May 1987, a drawing Maritza knew well. We both turned and looked at each other incredulously, with our jaws dropped to the floor. It is this kind of confirmation that keeps me pressing forward as I try to make sense of these perplexing accounts.

cardboard owl on a lonely road

> Then, Clelland brought out a standee of a four foot owl, and that did it: Maritza realized that this was a phenomenon not unique to me, her husband, and that changed us both monumentally in terms of us both together accepting the reality of all of this, and the healings and my preoccupation with UFO-related phenomena and metaphysics. Also, I'd like to make it clear that I do not feel that I was 'abducted'; I feel that I had a 'contact' incident, related to medical issues (partially with my sinuses) back in 1987.

There's more to Rick's account, and the second part gets a bit more bizarre. When he told me what had happened I was a bit overwhelmed. I'll add my

reactions at the end. Here's the rest of his story:

> But then, something far stranger was to occur that afternoon than the mutual epiphanies for Maritza and I.
>
> About thirty minutes into Clelland's lecture, something began to happen that shocked me. Never before had I seen anything like this. Vertically, along Clelland's right side, stood a carbon copy of his shape, but all in a dark green emerald light-body. This green light-body mirrored the movements of Clelland, but out of sync. Clelland, who was at the podium but sometimes moved out from behind it and around it, would move, and then just a split second after, the head, torso and legs of the green light-body would move the same movement, the same direction, and yet other times the green light-body would move first and then Clelland himself would move the same way a split second after.
>
> Because this had never happened to me before– seeing someone and one of their mirrored light-bodies–I was a little shocked and awed, and in hushed tones, I told Maritza what I was seeing.
>
> Maritza did not want us to attract any attention, and kept hushing me quiet, but I was fit to be tied. I couldn't believe that I was seeing what I was seeing, and it lasted the next forty five minutes until he finished and left the stage. Afterward, I went up and checked the stage for mirrors, plastic or glass in front of the stage or anything that would fully account for what I saw. There was nothing unusual at all around the very simple stage and camera set.
>
> As it turned out, I was fortunate enough to talk with Clelland for a couple hours later after the lecture, and I admired his detailed approach to his subject matter, as well as his keen artistic skill. And as Maritza and I left the convention and lecture hall and walked to the parking lot near the desert's edge, from just to the north of the Yavapai convention center, an owl began hooting, almost as if the owl was serenading us at sunset as we approached our rental car. How about that for some owl synchronicity!

Rick described a glowing green light body standing right alongside me on stage. When he told me this, it explained the sense of emotional anxiety as we sat together a year earlier. He admitted that at the time he didn't feel right telling me something so bizarre. Looking back, I doubt I would have been put off by what he had seen—*everything* about this phenomenon is bizarre!

I should add that I never felt or sensed anything during my presentation. My time on stage felt wonderful, and the talk unfolded in a way that left me feeling proud.

I've actually heard of something similar. During the abductee support meeting at that same conference the year before, a man told Yvonne Smith nearly the same thing. While she was standing on stage, he saw a glowing light body, phasing in and out alongside her as she gave her presentation.

Asking to see an owl, but seeing a UFO instead

Sunday, October 16, 2016

"Like a tear in the sky."

My friend Jack had a remarkable experience while reading the last few pages of my book *The Messengers*. He sent me this message on the evening of Sept 14, 2016:

> Earlier tonight I asked and wished I would see an owl while at work. Within minutes of doing so I saw a strange looking light in the sky, I looked away for less than a second and it was gone!

We spoke shortly after the experience, and he described seeing a stationary lighted "dash" just sitting in the sky. This was near an airport, and his first thought was it might be a plane, but right in that moment he realized it wasn't like any aircraft he had ever seen. He watched this glowing object for about ten seconds before it vanished.

Jack messaged his partner Suzanne moments after the sighting. That text is time stamped 6:49 p.m. and he messaged me at 10:48 p.m., right when he finished the book.

During our conversations and messaging, Jack used the words *wishing*, *asking*, *hoping*, and *expecting* when describing his desire to see an owl.

Jack wrote: “I was scanning light posts and building rooftops half expecting to eye one. The sky was a very dark blue, not yet black. As I turned the corner I gave up on the notion [of seeing an owl], and suddenly saw the light.”

He described it as a "dash" but felt it was more, "like a tear in the sky... like if you had a dark piece of fabric with a tear in it with a bright flash light behind it."

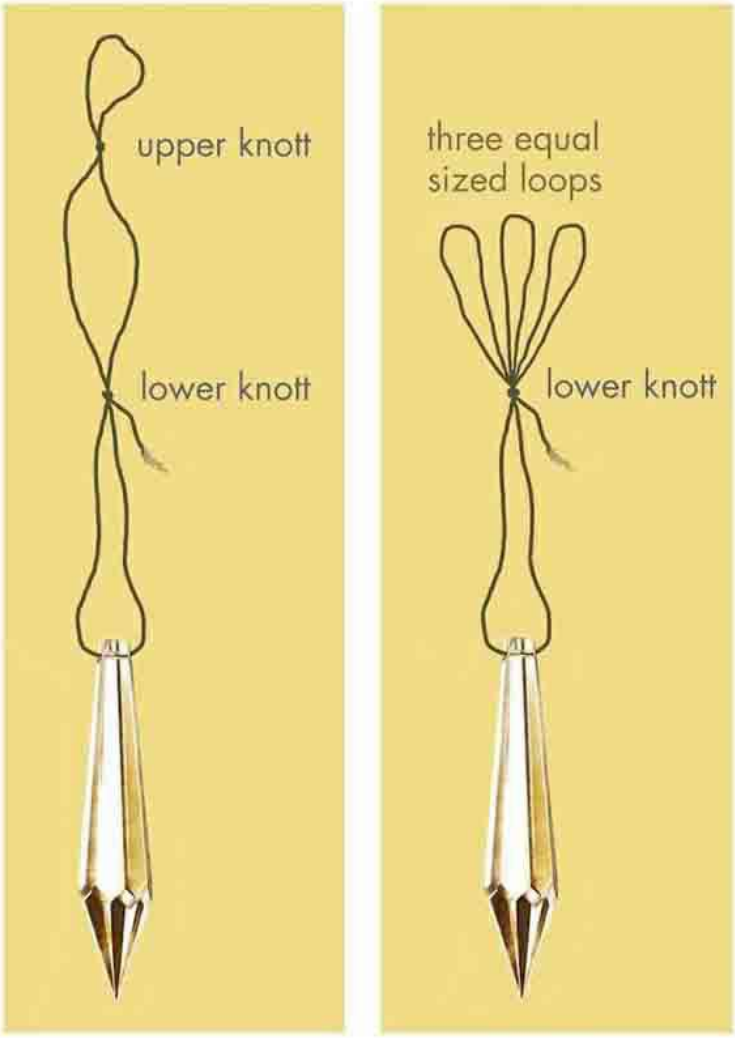
Jack said, “I was on the last few pages [of your book] when I saw it. This sighting happened just moments after asking to see an owl.”

This is remarkable to me. Jack was wishing he would see an owl, and seconds later he saw a strange light instead, just as he was finishing my book. I’d initially typed UFO in the previous sentence, but changed it to “strange light” because he wasn’t describing a flying object, it didn’t seem to be an object at all.

Jack is actually in the book, and his stories show up a few times. One amazing event was that we both had a very similar grizzly bear dream on the same night, and I was awakened from my dream by a hooting great horned owl just outside my window. That story is on page 294 of *The Messengers*.

Andrea’s pendulum

Saturday, October 13, 2018



odd change in the pendulum string

This is a story from around three years ago, sometime in 2015. Andrea has a crystal pendulum tied with a black thread. The thread has two knots, so you can hold it high or low depending on the knot. Andrea uses this pendulum while pinching the lower knot, and I use it at the higher knot.

For a time it was sitting unused on a shelf in the closet, then one day Andrea asked me, “Did you do anything to the thread on my pendulum?” I

said no. She showed me the thread, *and it had been re-tied with three very short loops.*

I didn't have any idea how this could have happened, and I carefully examined her pendulum. The black thread had been tied in a way that created three evenly sized loops near the top. I hadn't tied it like this, and neither had Andrea. I scrutinized the knot and tried to untie it. I am quite skilled with knots, but I couldn't make any headway to getting this thing undone. I really worked at it, even using tweezers, but nothing was working.

I gave up and set the pendulum back in its spot on the shelf. A few days later Andrea's asked me how I'd gotten the knot undone. I didn't know what she meant, and said, "I couldn't, it was tied too tightly."

She showed me the thread. *The knot was undone, and the thread was back in its previous configuration.*

Again, I carefully examined the thread, and it was now just as it had been before. Neither of us have any idea how it had gotten tied into such a tight knot, and then how it could have returned to its original configuration.

Pendulums are simply a small crystal pendant at the end of a short silver chain or string, and these are standard issue within the new-age community. The user will hold the string steady, let the crystal dangle, then ask a yes or no question and wait for an answer. The pendulum then gently swings or rotates as a reply.

A note from a reader

Tuesday, March 1, 2016

> I’m currently reading your book, *The Messengers*. I am about one eighth into the book and already you’ve made me feel eerily like I’m a part of something much bigger. Before I felt eerily alone in my experiences.

This is an excerpt from an email from someone who has had some very challenging encounters. These experiences are the kind of thing that would be consistent with what’s reported in the book she was reading. I understand more than anyone the eerie feelings that come with this stuff. No good answers, but I no longer feel alone either. And like the reader, it feels better being part of something much bigger than just ourselves.

I get a lot of emails like this, and I recognize that what I am doing has been helpful.

Rest In Peace, Elaine Douglass

Tuesday, January 28, 2014

Elaine Douglass died yesterday. It's with a heavy heart that I share this sad news.

I'd first heard of Elaine in 2008 during an audio interview with Karyn Dolan. She was formerly MUFON state director for both the District of Columbia and Utah. After hearing her talk, I simply looked up her number and called. Later, while driving through Utah, I made it a point to visit her home in Moab.

On our very first meeting, she asked for my help in planting a tree in her yard. I also met and played with her new kitten, Pip. When we went into her house, she revealed that she had made me a cake (a lemon cake). This was at a time when I was terribly distressed at what might have been my own involvement with the phenomenon.

I met with her a few more times at her home in Utah, and we spoke on the phone often. Elaine was a very strong personality, and that's an understatement. I can see how she could rub some folks the wrong way, especially the higher ups at MUFON. I liked her enormously.

I posted an audio interview with Elaine (where she calls me "honey") back in October of 2013, just a little over three months ago, linked here. There was a side of me that was a bit hesitant to do that interview, because her outlook on these subjects was so dark—there is a curious pressure within this UFO sandbox to share only the love and light vibe. Elaine was in top form during that talk, and I feel very strongly that her ideas need to be a part of the overall UFO debate.

Elaine and I spent a lot of late night hours on the phone, where we wrestled with questions and challenges that emerged from her ongoing research. She was also extremely supportive when I shared my experiences, and I loved that she spoke to me straight and bluntly. I will forever cherish her passionate forthright ways. I gained something enormously vital from her friendship. She saw the complexities of the UFO phenomenon very differently than I did, and she wasn't timid about telling me what she thought.

Here is a thoughtful set of memories from fellow blogger Lucretia Heart at her *At Spirals' End* site, linked here.

Rest In Peace, Elaine.

Jim Marrs has died

Wednesday, August 2, 2017

Author and researcher Jim Marrs died today. He was one profoundly charismatic guy—a lost breed. The world is a less dynamic place without him.

I walked into the hotel bar of a UFO conference in Tempe Arizona and saw Jim sitting alone at a table off in a corner. This was back in 2007, and I was nervous to do what I was about to do next—I walked over and asked if I could join him. He smiled and said, “If you buy me a beer you sure can!” I asked what he was having, and he said Dos Equis. I went to the bar, ordered two of them, and when I turned around I saw Anne and Whitley Strieber had joined him. I spent the next few hours saying very little and listening intently.

I had lunch with Jim a few years later at another conference, this time in Laughlin, Nevada. I was waiting in line to get into the casino diner, and he was standing next to me with two women—one was researcher Paola Harris, and the other was an investigator working on a book. We all stood together making small talk and he asked me to join them.

The other woman at the table was researching a case that involved a murder she suspected was somehow connected to a military base. Jim was playing the role of mentor, offering his insights on how to proceed, what to look for, what to ask, what not to ask, and how to be careful. I was fascinated to sit and listen.

Jim cut his teeth in newspaper reporting in a bygone era of journalism. This was a writer who knew how to roll up his sleeves and get something done, and done well.

But more than anything, Jim exuded a folksy charisma. If he shared a beer with a witness at a bar, they would certainly fall under his spell. I can imagine the most tight-lipped government insider giving up juicy tidbits just because Jim was so disarming. He was a joy to be near.

I read *Crossfire* shortly after seeing Oliver Stone’s movie *JFK*. To say it blew me away would barely express the impact that book had on me.

Jim wrote about the JFK assassination, UFOs, 9-11, remote viewing, secret societies and more. He wrote a fictional book titled *The Sisterhood of*

the Rose, a thriller set in during WWII. He said, “The problem with writing fiction is that it has to make sense!”

He also wrote a comic book titled *Oswald’s Confession.* This little gem fit some of the confusing puzzle pieces together in a way that helped me better understand what might have happened in Dallas.

Jim Marrs at Carousel Club
Dallas, Texas 1963

This photo shows a 20-year old Jim Marrs dancing on stage at Jack Ruby's Carousel Club in Dallas, Texas. The photo was taken in October of 1963, a month before the Kennedy assassination.

I am blessed to have known this amazing man.

My 2013 interview with Jim is linked here.

Brad Steiger 1936—2018

Wednesday, May 9, 2018

I just heard that Brad Steiger, one of the hardest working giants in this field, has died. He was 82. I was honored to spend a few hours in conversation listening to his deep, hypnotic voice. I did two interviews with him, where he shared many of his own personal experiences. He made a strong impression on me, and it didn't feel like I was speaking with an author—he was much more of a mystic.

I was shaky in the first interview from 2011, and you can hear it in my voice. I wanted him to play my therapist and I came across as needy. Three years later in 2014, I was much more grounded, and we talked about the personal challenges, both his and mine, of trying to deal with these issues. Brad shared his 1967 UFO sighting, and we discussed the profound implications. He speculates this was orchestrated for him, and he was a participant in what he calls “The Magic Theater.” Brad was a gracious gentleman and visionary. He will be missed.

Three years later in 2014 I was much more grounded, and we talked about my personal challenges trying to deal with these issues. He was a gracious gentleman and visionary. He will be missed.

My two interviews were done three years apart, and they play well side-by-side, creating over two-hours of conversation. The 2011 interview is linked here, and the 2014 is here.

My memories of Bob Dean

Tuesday, October 16, 2018

Bob Dean has died at the age of 89. I met him in 2009 at the UFO Congress when it was still in Laughlin, Nevada. Within that crowd he was quite the celebrity, so he was always surrounded by a group of people eager to speak with him.

There came a point when I saw him sitting alone in the midst of the busy conference. I politely approached, and asked if I could ask him a few questions.

He graciously pointed to the chair next to him, and I sat down. He wore an ascot and was smoking a cigar. I felt like Luke Skywalker meeting Yoda. I said I was new in this field and thought I might have had some UFO experiences, and was hoping for any advice he might have to offer.

He replied with that deep, slow voice, “Be very careful my good man. You are standing before Pandora’s Box, and once opened, it can never be closed again.”

At that point I had been looking hard into my own experiences, so I said something like, “Well, it’s a little late for that.”

I explained that I was taking my first steps into these waters. I was beginning my own research, dealing with my own memories, and it had been really confusing for me.

He told me, “Here’s my advice in these matters. Keep a very open mind.” Long pause, “And keep your bullshit meter set on high.”

He was quite a radiant guy. Since that day I’ve followed him through various online interviews. It was shortly after our meeting that he began speaking publicly about his own UFO contact experiences. In the last few years I’d noticed he wasn’t shy about telling the world he was getting old, and looked forward to “finally going home.”

I now need to reply to owl stories with a form letter

Thursday, September 6, 2018

When people ask what proof I have that this owl stuff is real, I'll tell them, "*Come look at my email inbox.*"

This blog will soon be ten years old, and right from the onset I was asking to hear people's owl experiences. At first there weren't too many, and I was able to do a lot of back and forth correspondence. I truly valued these exchanges, and they helped me come to terms with some of the complexities of this owl mystery.

With each passing year I've received more stories; what began as a trickle, has become a torrent. I used to be able to give a thorough reply to each person's story, but now that's nearly impossible.

I'm at the point where I can no longer offer the thoughtful response these experiences deserve. Sadly, I now need to reply with a form letter, and that letter is essentially an apology.

Many of the people I've connected with have had terribly confusing experiences, and at times I've been able to do more than just answer their questions, I've provided a kind of solace. I feel a kinship to each person who contacts me with their owl story, and I take this responsibility very seriously.

This work is important.

Synchro-Owl

Wednesday, March 9, 2016

My pal Hunter D called me the other day laughing. He was near the end of my book, and said the whole time he was reading it he was “so primed to see an owl!” Then he told me a funny story, and I asked if he’d write it out for my blog.

> Hell yeah I will! On Wednesday afternoon, I walked out of my shop to get some fresh air and enjoy the winter weather, (cold, gray, wet and windy). I was rather emotional and preoccupied. The shop is on a slight rise, and I was looking out over the ponderosa and juniper forest and I thought, I should call Mike right now.
>
> At that moment, I turned to walk back into the shop and get my phone. I looked up at the adjacent building and on the second story deck railing there was this mechanical owl that I’d never noticed before. This is like two seconds after deciding to call you. I immediately identified it as a fake, but then it turned its head and stared right at me! I recognized it for what it was, a motion detecting function, but it added a nice element to the synchronicity! I belly laughed all the way to get my phone. I called you at 1:07 and we got disconnected so I called back at, oh you’re gonna love this, 1:23.
>
> Great chatting. Finished the book, enjoyed every page.

This story might not seem like much, but it’s a good example of what I’ve been hearing on a nearly daily basis. People are contacting me saying they are seeing owls, most often real ones, while reading the book. It happens so often that it’s become normal, yet I’m still amazed.

Gucci owl and UFO suede boots

Friday, October 19, 2018

…was $830 now $697.99 (18% off)

There's not much I can say about this.

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HYPNOSIS AND THE TRIAL

Until you make the unconscious conscious, it will direct your life and you will call it fate.

—Carl Gustav Jung

The challenge of hypnosis

Thursday, January 31, 2019

Hypnosis is a source of bitter contention within the UFO community. One faction would see it as vital in abduction research, while the other would dismiss anything gained through hypnosis as useless—or even destructive.

In early November of 2017, I was invited to a home in New Hampshire where a small group of experiencers had planned to gather for a pot luck on a Saturday evening. Seven of the people expected to attend had let me share their stories in my books, so I was eager to make the long drive to join them.

When I heard abduction researcher Mary Rodwell would be part of the gathering, I emailed her ahead of time to arrange a hypnosis session while I was there. We scheduled it for Sunday morning, so I brought a sleeping bag and pad and spent Saturday night in a room used as an office. I awoke at dawn to the hooting of a barred owl out the window.

That morning, Mary and I spent almost two hours in an empty bedroom. She hypnotized me with the intention of finding the source of my fears in connection with my UFO experiences, and the story that emerged really shook me up. I cried a lot during the session, and Mary dried my tears.

What came through was jumbled and emotional, and I didn't know what to make of it. The story was remarkable, and much of it matched with what I'd already read in other abduction accounts. I shared the details with a few friends, but was cautious to treat it as a memory of a real event.

I had attempted hypnosis several times before that Sunday morning with Mary in New Hampshire; I'd tried with Leo Sprinkle, Barbara Lamb and Budd Hopkins. I consider them skilled hypnotherapists and extremely caring, yet very little emerged in those earlier attempts. They all took place during a time when these issues were terribly oppressive, and I think I was way too anxious to allow myself to fully go under.

I had an extremely successful experience with hypnosis in the summer of 2014. I was working with Lorraine Flaherty, a past-life hypnotherapist, and my goal was to deal with my issues of clinical depression.

Unlike the previous attempts, I am certain I was fully under and the results were miraculous. Though not our focus, we touched on some UFO

experiences, and what came out was so poetic that all I could do was treat it as some sort of grand metaphor.

That account is told in a post titled: *thoughts on a past life hypnosis session*.

I also did a session with Dianne Morrison using the hypnosis techniques developed by Dolores Cannon. That experience was quite therapeutic, but we hardly touched on any UFO issues.

I was in Los Angeles in August of 2018, and staying with my friend Greg Bishop. He's a UFO researcher and author, and hosts a weekly radio interview show. We were in his living room when I told him that I had an appointment the next day to do a hypnosis session with abduction researcher Yvonne Smith.

He looked at me sternly and said, "Well, you do that and you know what you're going to find."

I replied, "I get what you mean, but I really want to go to as many hypnotherapists as I can. I want to see what comes up, to try and figure out if their outlook influences anything."

He immediately lit up, smiled and said, "I can get behind that!"

I explained that I'd talked about this with Mac Tonnies, and we both thought it would be interesting. I imagined myself a bit like Vincent Price, playing the role of the mad scientist who tests the potions on himself.

The next day I drove to Pasadena, and arrived at Yvonne's office about a half an hour early. There was a park right next door, and I spent that time lying on the grass in the warmth of the sun. I spoke aloud, declaring I was open and receptive to whatever would help me better understand these experiences. I was ready to move forward, and I said so.

I sent Yvonne an email about a month earlier to try and make an appointment for a hypnosis session. Here's her reply to my initial message, "So nice to hear from you. I am currently reading your book about synchronicity and owls." I think that counts as a synchronicity about owls and UFOs.

I did an audio interview with Yvonne back in 2012. She is soft spoken in a way that is almost disarming, and talks about her research into the UFO contact experience with a kind of calmness that doesn't match the crazy intensity of the subject.

In both the 2017 session with Mary and the 2018 session with Yvonne, we

looked at the night of March 10th, 2013. I wanted to explore this event because there had never been any fear associated with it.

The session with Mary played out as a bit disjointed, and a clearer narrative emerged with Yvonne—yet the story was essentially the same. I don't think the differences had anything to do with the techniques of the therapists. I was a little nervous going into the session with Mary, and we tried to cover a number of other events, while my session with Yvonne focused on just that one night.

While under the hypnotic trance with Yvonne, the story began in a nearly identical way, and it felt like I was watching a re-run of Mary's session. I tried to avoid going down the exact same path, but it didn't seem like I had any control. The same story emerged. I am posting the transcript with Yvonne simply because it's a bit easier to follow.

At a few points in the text the time count on the audio file is noted, and I did this because I try to pay attention to certain synchronistic numbers.

After the induction, Yvonne asked about the night of March 10th, 2013. This was when I saw a round structure on a hilltop in southern Utah while sleeping outside.

What follows is a near complete transcript of the hypnosis session with Yvonne.

> **Yvonne:** Just describe anything that comes forward.
>
> **Mike:** I'm in my sleeping bag, and it's calm. I can lay on my back and look at the stars. Off to my left is the hillside, and there is this structure that looks like a flying saucer, or a house. It's got a ring of lights around the outside. It seems more like a section out of a cylinder… If I do look at the object, all I need to do it turn my head. It's not hidden… and I have no sense of fear at all, and it certainly looks like a landed craft. There is no sense of concern or worry, more just curiosity at how this ended up there…

These descriptions of the round structure matched my conscious memories. I then began to describe waking up and seeing an odd light behind a big bush at the foot of my sleeping bag.

Mike: There's a glow behind the bush. I know it's them, I know it's them, I *know* that it's them, but I'm just dismissing it as though it's just a light.

Yvonne: Try not to question yourself, try not to analyze… get in touch with that feeling and emotion that it's them and just describe what you are sensing or seeing or hearing.

Mike: I'm sensing this knowing, that it's them, and I need to lie down again.

Yvonne: And were you lying down?

Mike: No, I was sort of sitting up in my sleeping bag and I laid back down… I feel like I just snapped back to sleep or something…

(there's a change in my voice)

I'm out, *I'm out*, I'm looking down at this thing. It's big and I'm looking down at it. It seems just black, I guess there are little lights around it. And I'm floating and I'm above it and I'm… I don't think I'm in my body, it's some other thing.

I was looking down at an enormous round craft setting on the hilltop. It seemed to be the same round structure I had seen from my sleeping bag, but now I was hovering above it. This was all seen in quick images.

Yvonne: Do you feel you're out of body?

Mike: I think I'm still lying in the sleeping bag, but some part of me is looking down at this thing.

Yvonne: Do you get a sense of anyone around you?

Mike: I'm not alone. It just feels like *this again*. Like, oh God—*this again*.

Yvonne: Just describe everything.

Mike: I'm walking in a hallway.

Yvonne: Can you describe the hallway.

recreation of the hallway as it seemed during the session

Mike: The floor is flat but the walls are all curved… I don't know how I got in there, all of a sudden I'm just walking there. I'm not alone. They are on either side, on one side or the other, there is either one or two on one side, or one or two on the other. They are on the side of me. They aren't in front of me, and they aren't behind me.

Yvonne: Can you describe them?

Mike: They're bald and skinny and big eyes and… but it's… I feel like… I'm not tall anymore…

Yvonne: Do they feel familiar to you?

Mike: (immediate answer) Yes. But it's… (groan) mysterious at the same time, it feels like *SO* normal… Can I go deeper? Can you do something? I just need to be deeper…

Yvonne: Take a deep breath, allow yourself to drift down deeper.

Yvonne spent a few minutes going through a verbal process to deepen the hypnotic state. She spoke slowly and described walking down a long staircase to a lower level. After a few minutes, she continued asking me questions.

Yvonne: Do you still feel yourself going down the hallway?

Mike: Yeah, *I'm not me*, I'm one of them, and I feel like I'm a little bit mixed up but it feels completely normal. It feels like they had a rubber suit waiting for me, like on a hook or on a coat hanger and I just ended up in it. And now I'm walking down this hall as something else. And I'm the same height as the things right and left of me. It seems I'm maybe five foot tall or something, but I'm definitely not as tall as I am normally. I'm shorter.

I was seeing brief images of a curved hallway. It wasn't like watching a movie, it was happening in a series of quick flashes. I didn't say this aloud during the session, but I looked down at my hands and I had long fingers. I was skinny and had on a tight fitting uniform. I was just like the beings on each side of me.

Yvonne: Describe everything all around you, what is happening?

Mike: It feels important.

Yvonne: And what do you feel is important?

Mike: Whatever the reason is that I'm here.

Yvonne: Is there communication with them?

Mike: It feels like it. I end up in this room. And there are other beings there and it feels like they are sitting. And it feels like a courtroom or a

conference room. And they are all staring at me.

Yvonne: Can you describe the conference room?

Mike: Very plain. It seems like what I'm seeing is a conference room like you would have in a hotel. It's not much, it's very plain, there is nothing on the walls. There is a simple table, and it seems like they are sitting at this table on one side… It feels like I'm alone on the other side of the room. And they are all looking at me. There might be one or two on my side of the room, the ones that walked me down the hall. But I'm not sure.

Yvonne: And what do they look like, the ones around the table?

Mike: It's foggy. They are all bald. And they are not moving, they are sitting very still. It's feels like a trial, or like a meeting, and they are all looking at me. I don't think I'm at a podium, but it feels like that kind of thing. It feels like a trial.

(long pause)

Yvonne: Can you describe what is being communicated?

Mike: That now is the time, and I agreed to this, and I'm here because *now is the time*.

(long pause)

I'm confused, I can't remember all the… (gasp) I don't remember… I don't know… I don't know why they are saying it….

Yvonne: You will be able to remember all of the details. Very easily. Do they describe [what it means when they say] now is the time?

Mike: Why does it have to be SO hard. They didn't tell me it would be this hard being here. I mean it was… they… I… I'm like fighting… I

didn't know it would be so hard to be here.

Yvonne: And where is here?

Mike: My life on earth. I didn't… (gasp)

Yvonne: Do you ask them why?

Mike: They just say I agreed to it. But they don't understand what it is to be here and how… (gasp) and how… They don't know and I do and they don't know how hard it is *and I do* and they can't… They're blank about it. They're… (my voice is very emotional)

Yvonne: What else do they communicate to you.

Mike: It's time. IT'S NOW! Like I… Like… Everything leading up to this is… *IT'S NOW!*

Yvonne: And what is going to happen with now?

Mike: Everything is going to change.

Yvonne: Do they describe how?

Mike: Like the job I came here to do is starting. I had no idea it would… it's so hard and they don't understand…

I began crying and Yvonne tried to console me. I sobbed uncontrollably for the next few minutes. I speak again at the audio time count of 1:11:11. At this point I am talking and crying at the same time.

Yvonne: And what is it that is so emotional Mike? Just get in touch with those feelings. Tell me what is happening, what are you feeling.

Mike: *Being here is so hard!* Everything about it *is so hard*. I spent so many years being SO sad — in this PAIN! It's like pain to just be

here… and they don't… they just said I… (sobbing)

Yvonne: Mike, do they tell you what you are supposed to do now? That the time is now?

Mike: I come forward [with what's happened to me]. I talk about it. And I'm supposed to play some role and it's SO fucked up! It's like they can't… Like they don't even know what it's like to feel sad. *They don't know what it's like to feel*… (sobbing)

Yvonne: Do you try to explain that to them?

Mike: I try and they don't… they don't… They just say I agreed to it. They said, "You knew, you agreed." (sobbing)

Yvonne: So they want you to talk about your experiences?

Mike: (emphatic) They want me to play some role, like I have some duty.

They just say it, and they don't know what that means, how fucked up it is, what they are asking. They don't know what they're asking. They don't understand what it means to be here and have to deal with sadness and fears and… and … and loneliness. They just don't understand that part.

They just say it's time and that I agreed to it, and they are very… it's not like stern… it's like they're matter of fact, it's like some business deal. (stammering) They're just… now… you're… it's you… now is like…

(suddenly speaking very clearly)

IT'S NOW… You agreed to this and now it's happening. *Right now!*

At this point the sobbing abruptly stops. It lasted only three minutes, but it

seemed much longer. It felt like I *deflated*, I palpably changed from extremely tense and very emotional, to perfectly calm. It felt like I sunk down into the couch and stopped breathing. I was silent for a long time.

Yvonne: Do they describe what they want you to do in detail?

Mike: (very calm voice) I think I'm back in the sleeping bag.

I don't think they describe it, if they do I don't… (long pause) I don't think I can say it, I don't think I'm allowed to say it.

Yvonne: You can say it Mike. You can verbalize it.

Mike: No, I don't think I can say what they want. I don't know what they want me to do. I KNOW that I wrote a book after, I KNOW that I started talking after, I KNOW I did all that stuff, but I think there's MORE and I don't know what it is.

Yvonne: They are just telling you the time is now?

Mike: The impression I have is that I agreed to this in some other realm. I ended up here on earth and I had this life… and I've done a lot of things… *and that's over*. And there is this new thing that started right then. And they were stern about it, and they were clear about it… and I didn't have a choice. I didn't have a choice. I didn't have any choice, I was told there was a contract, there was an agreement, or like a plan, or like a mission. Whatever I had agreed to—it's NOW.

I don't see their faces, and the room is just some stupid room in a hotel and I don't…

Yvonne: Is the room full?

Mike: It doesn't seem very full. No, it seems there are two beings, one on each side of me, maybe… It feels like they are at a table all sitting and I can't see their faces and I don't know if I'm taking to one or all of

them at the same time. It feels like I'm talking to all of them at the same time. It feels like the message is: YOUR MISSION STARTS NOW.

At this point, Yvonne changes the subject. Before the session started, I'd asked her to bring up the subject of owls. I requested that she ask me about owls, and what they might mean.

Yvonne: As they are communicating this to you, do you feel your connection with owls is part of what you are supposed to do, part of your mission?

(long pause)

Mike: I don't think we talk about owls.

Yvonne: What sense do you get about your connection with owls?

Mike: I get that the owl isn't important. The owl is like a symbol, or like a sign on a door. It's just a sign on a door and what's behind the door is what's important…

For a few moments I mumble and stammer. I'm struggling to say something. I speak in fragments about being an artist, and that I understand something—then I begin speaking very clearly.

Mike: I understand how people take in a story, and how they need a symbol or a sign on the door. But the owl is meaningless to what is on the other side of the door. It's just the doorway that's important.

The owl is the right symbol for the door. We are on *this* side, and EVERYTHING else is on *that* side of the door. There is a LOT more! We are in this little tight hallway here, and on the other side of the door is this vastness!

Yvonne: Are they communicating anything else to you?

Mike: No, that's the only message I feel like I got. It's time now and I agreed to it and it doesn't feel like I've got any say in it. (time count 1:23:45) And it feels like I'm fucking pissed and angry that they would… that I would have to BE here, and they don't understand.

Yvonne: Do they tell you, or do they communicate to you, that eventually it will become clear to you what else you need to do?

Mike: I think it is implied somehow, but they don't say it. I feel like I never fit in here. I guess I did in a way, but I was battling so much emotional sadness.

Yvonne: You mean your time on earth?

Mike: Yeah, it's not clean and easy, it's all mixed up. Like I'm part of *here* and part of *there*, and it's not simple. The emotions are all messed up, and tangled up. I don't think there is anything else I can get from this. It feels like there is some lock and they hold the key, and they're not opening that lock for me. It feels like it'll happen sometime, maybe, before I die. It feels like I am waiting for an envelope to be delivered, and I'll open the envelope and find the instructions. But I don't have that envelope yet, it feels like *they* are holding that envelope.

Yvonne: Are you ready to leave this now.

Mike: Yes, I gotta get out of here. It's too much.

At this point Yvonne began a formal process of ending the session.

~ ~ ~

Hypnosis is very strange, and I'm cautious to give this new information too much meaning. There is no way of knowing if these brief flashes actually happened, so I'm not allowing myself to see the story that emerged as literal. I've read plenty of similar accounts, so my subconscious could have been

front-loaded in a way where I just made it all up. Yet for me the story has an emotional power, there is no denying that.

It feels much better taking it in as a sort of metaphor, like if I asked a wise man for advice and he told me a parable. On that level the story is helpful, and perhaps even beautiful.

There have been three hypnosis sessions that all point to the same thing—the past life regression with Lorraine in 2014, Mary in 2017, and Yvonne in 2018. Each tells a similar story, and each made me sob uncontrollably.

Taking this literally, I have a dual identity—partly as an alien, and partly as myself, as Mike. I've made a soul agreement to incarnate on earth and play an important role, yet I don't know what it is, and haven't got a choice in the matter.

You can understand how this can seem overwhelming.

Part of me wants to have a big belly laugh and dismiss it all, but if you look at how that event plays into the timeline of my life, some things fit so cleanly. I underwent a profound change within 48 hours of that night in the Utah desert, and it seems to match the message I received under hypnosis. I've been calling that night in 2013 my confirmation event, and I'm not exaggerating—my old life ended, and a new life began.

This new life has involved compulsively writing about UFOs and owls, to the exclusion of nearly everything else. The beings in the conference room told me I was here to play a role, and I have to wonder if that's exactly what I've been doing, and am doing now. I mean, is this post you are reading somehow serving their agenda?

I wrote this on page 23 of *The Messengers*: "I can't help but wonder if I was somehow chosen to archive these reports and turn them into a book. Yes, that sounds presumptuous, *but that's how it feels*."

The first owl book began in the aftermath of that night in Utah, and I was saying something that clearly parallels the message from the hypnosis sessions.

I've had powerful experiences peering into my subconscious, yet I have no way of knowing what really happened. The story was remarkable, but I don't want to be seduced by its power. I mean, there obviously wasn't a tacky conference room with ugly carpet on a flying saucer, yet I was confronted with a vision of *something*. Identical stories emerged in different hypnosis sessions, but were they real or was it confabulated from all the UFO books

I’ve read?

Can hypnosis lead to false memories? The answer is undoubtedly yes, but are all the memories false? I’m not an expert, but I have to think that some aspects must be accurate, or partially so. The bigger question for me is: were my memories false, accurate, or a blurring of something in between?

I’m struggling to hold two ideas in my mind at the same time—the story that unfolded on Yvonne’s couch was both real, *and* unreal. This is my conflict and I may never find an answer, but I still need to proceed forward.

From frantic to normal

June 19, 2019

I described something unbelievable while sobbing on a hypnotherapist's couch. A story came out that I have a shared identity with an alien being, and I'd been put here on earth to serve their agenda. That's heavy stuff.

After the session, I left Yvonne's office and found a little cafe in Pasadena to get a cup of coffee and a cookie. I thanked the girl behind the counter, sipped the coffee and tried to figure out why I was acting so calm. I had just been confronted with something terribly distressing, and it would've been totally appropriate to freak out—but I wasn't.

I'd spent the previous decade trying to cope with memories and fears, and I endured a torrent of weirdness in those years. It took a lot of work to deal with every challenge, and keep moving forward. There had been a long string of synchronicities, dreams, UFO experiences and emerging memories; some were subtle, some were funny, a lot were unsettling, and a few nearly broke me. There were times, especially in the beginning, when it felt like I was drowning.

I now see each event as having been staged for me, a sort of incremental progression in one direction. Whatever happened, it seems to have been a kind of organized strategy—a master plan. I would confront some weird experience, write about it in the blog, then another thing would happen and I'd write about that too. It feels like the order and intensity of these events had been precisely arranged to transform me into the person I am now. It wasn't like I was getting stronger, it was more like some old me was crumbling, and a newer me was emerging.

Whoever set this plan in action did it for a reason. Maybe it was little gray beings on a flying saucer, or maybe it was some higher part of myself—I truly don't know, yet either option is fascinating.

When I saw those owls in the mountains back in 2006, the strangeness was nearly unbearable. I was desperate to find some meaning behind it, and started my obsessive owl research. A lot has happened since then, and what began as frantic madness, now feels normal.

I got in my rental car and drove across the busy LA freeways. I played the

music loud, drank my coffee and ate my cookie.

CONCLUSION

I say the point of all these experiences is to be baffled by them, almost as though they are a kind of Koen that we're not meant to solve but that we're meant to chew over until our rational mind cracks and we begin to think in entirely new ways and hopefully act in entirely new ways.

—Kenneth Ring

This book has chronicled my attempt to make sense of a life of odd experiences. While rereading these posts, I was struck by how many times I repeated the line, "Is this metaphoric, or is it literal?" After over a decade of saying the same thing, I need to deal with this question, so here goes—it's both metaphoric *and* literal. This might seem like a cop out, but I'm trying to be at peace with that answer.

I've had literal experiences that play out with metaphoric symbolism. The events are real *and* unreal. This isn't a contradiction, but more of an overlap—and there's a tension in trying to live with that.

The strict materialist won't be satisfied with a metaphor, but it's still something real, at least to me. It can induce a feeling of wonder, and tap into the deepest part of my psyche. I am an artist and have some understanding of the symbolic, but I think there is more to it.

The big question is, did these things *really* happen? The answer is, absolutely yes. A more specific question would be, have I been interacting with little aliens on flying saucers? That's not so easy, so I guess I could say maybe, but I truly don't know. It's difficult to step back and try to make sense of what I've endured. The book is finished, and from this perspective, what I see is a steady unraveling of my life, followed by a methodical rebuilding.

I'm a much different person after this decade of soul-searching. I still struggle with this stuff but I'm no longer stuck, and can finally trust my own

experiences. I don’t know the source of these mysteries and probably never will, but I’m okay with that.

Recently, someone asked me how my life has changed because of these experiences. I thought for a moment and said, “I now live in a magical universe.” I meant that, I see reality as something much richer and more mysterious than I could have ever conceived.

Why am I so driven, and why am I writing these books? I really don’t know. It’s not easy to separate what might be an enthusiastic interest, from what might be an unhealthy obsession.

What I can say, is that this has been a terribly exciting adventure.

Perhaps the UFO occupants organized all my experiences for a specific reason, and maybe this book is part of some grand plan. And maybe you, the reader, are also part of that plan.

APPENDIX

Author Robbie Graham asked me to contribute a chapter to his 2017 book, *UFOs: Reframing the Debate.* It was my honor to be part of this powerful collection of essays. Each chapter explores alternative thoughts on UFOs, specifically new ideas on how to revise our methodology to better understand the phenomenon in the 21st Century. One of the joys of this book is that so many of the contributors are my friends! Also, this book was published in the UK, so I kept the British spelling of a few key words—like *pyjamas!*[18]

Many of the ideas and emotions in this chapter were addressed earlier in this book. This essay is a sort of synthesis of my experiences, and the tensions that emerge in the shadow of mainstream research.

The essay that follows is included in the ebook only, and isn't in the print version. Permission for its addition here has been graciously granted by White Crow Books.

The Experience is Important

May 2017

There's a joke about a guy standing out on the street at night looking down at the pavement under a lamppost. His neighbor walks up and asks what he's doing, and he says, "I lost my keys." The neighbor asks if this is where he lost them, and the guy points to a tangle of thorny bushes off in the darkness, and says, "Oh no, I lost them over there, but this is a much easier place to look."

In many ways, this is the challenge of the UFO mystery. The pragmatic investigator might want to stay under that brightly lit lamppost, yet the core of the mystery is somewhere off in the darkness. Yes, it's easier to frame the inquiry within the clarity of what we can comfortably wrap our minds around, and maybe that's a good starting point. But looking into what a UFO might actually be, or what it might mean, is peering through a doorway into madness.

I recognize that there's a need to cling to what can easily be understood. There is a belief that UFO abduction reports can be explained away as little scientists in metal spaceships visiting us to conduct experiments. We get in metal helicopters and abduct grizzly bears in Yellowstone National Park; we tranquilize them, subject them to medical exams, take samples and then release them—so this analogy is perfect, right? The pilots of those flying saucers are essentially us, just a bit further along their own timeline. This idea, that the UFO occupants are visiting from some other planet, star system or galaxy has been dubbed the Extraterrestrial Hypothesis (ETH), and it has permeated the UFO community to the point that most researchers treat it as certainty.

The problem is that this tidy metaphor falls apart when you really start to examine the accounts. It seems the only way to adhere to that simplistic view is purposely to ignore a lot of what gets reported. It would seem that we are dealing with something much more bizarre than can be explained by the ETH.

Of all UFO sightings reported each year, over half can't be described as anything like a metal craft. Instead, the majority of reports are of ethereal

glowing orbs, most often orange in color. People are seeing something that might not be physical at all, at least in the way we understand it, yet seemingly under intelligent control. The orbs might glow brightly, but won't illuminate the things around them, as if incapable of projecting that light. This is just one point in a long list of things that just don't make sense.

Granted, visitors from far off planets may play some part in what is happening, but there are weird details that make this seem too simplistic.

One reader of my blog wrote this, and I agree: "I think the reality of what is going on is far stranger than the theories we've come up with. I think the idea of extraterrestrials is nowhere near as strange as what actually is." This from someone who awoke to a giant praying mantis standing at the foot of her bed.

There are aspects of this phenomenon that challenge everything. The web of little strings seems to go everywhere. Everything is on the table—life, death, sex, dreams, spirituality, psychic visions, genetics, expanded consciousness, mind-control, channeling, mysticism, miraculous healings, out-of-body experiences, hybrid children, personal transformation, powerful synchronicity, portals in the backyard, distorted time, telepathy, prophetic visions, trauma, ecstasy, and magic. It's as if our brains just aren't big enough to deal with the overload of so much weirdness.

If we talk about little lights in the sky, it shouldn't take long before we start talking about God. There is something about this mystery that forces us to confront the really big questions. Who are we? Why are we here? What does it all mean? These are the same questions that have followed us through the ages, and they well up again when wrestling with the UFO enigma. I'm always disappointed when a researcher avoids these deeper thoughts, never straying from the safety of that brightly lit lamppost.

The focus of my obsessive research has been the issues surrounding abduction. There is a reason for this; it's because I'm an abductee. This is no easy thing to say, and I'm terribly conflicted by what that even means. It's something that evades easy answers. What I can say with complete sincerity is that something has intersected with my life, and these extremely difficult events point to some form of UFO contact. Coming to terms with this has been a profound challenge and it has altered the direction of my life.

My problem with "ufology" is my own personal experiences. I've been at the receiving end of enough weird shit that nobody needs to tell me this stuff

is real. For this essay, I am going to mostly ignore all the sighting accounts and focus on what is pertinent to me—the so-called abduction phenomenon.

My other focus is owls, and how they seem to show up, either literally or symbolically, in relation to UFO contact. This traces back to my own first-hand experiences with owls, lots of them. When I first started seeing owls, it coincided with a booming voice in my head that said, “This has something to do with UFOs!” Their arrival and that message consumed my life. I started collecting stories with both owls and UFOs and it culminated in a nearly-400-page book. This essay will steer clear of owls—there is plenty to be said without opening that can of worms.

Before going any further, I need to state something as clearly as possible—I am not an objective researcher. I am immersed in these dark waters, and there is no way to separate myself from the tangled knot of emotions that come with what has happened in my life, things that go way beyond seeing little lights in the night-time sky. So, just know, whatever I say is coming from a place of obsessive self-examination, and how it ties into what I’ve heard from others. This would be true for any researcher who has had the direct experience. I don’t know if it’s possible to stay unbiased and detached in a field as highly charged as UFOs.

There has been a series of events peppered throughout my life that seem to imply some sort of otherworldly contact. As a boy I saw a weird orange flash in the sky while walking home from school and arrived home nearly two hours later than I should have. That same year, I had a close-up sighting of a coffee-can-shaped UFO that vanished in the blink of an eye. As a young man, I awoke to see five skinny big-eyed “aliens” out my bedroom window. I could talk about any of these memories around the dinner table, but they were all framed as just a funny little anecdote. I have more stories like these, and they all implied the same thing, but I wasn’t going there.

All that changed on Sunday, March 10th, 2013. I call this my confirmation event.

That night, I was on a lonely road in southern Utah driving home from a UFO conference. Rather than getting a hotel room I simply pulled off and slept out under the stars. It was cold and beautiful, and at some point I awoke to see a giant round structure positioned on the top of a nearby hill. It had a ring of lights around its outer surface and my first thought was, “That looks just like a landed flying saucer.”

I laid there for probably an hour, staring at it. I figured it was nothing more than a big house, and I eventually rolled over and went to sleep. This was the opening salvo in a long set of weird events.

As an aside, I went back to that same spot a year later to see if there really was a big round house on that hill spot. There was nothing.

The day after arriving home from the UFO conference, while standing next to my desk, I had what I can only call a psychic flash. I clearly saw a map of southern Utah with a straight yellow line running west to east with three points along its length. The image lasted no more than a second, and I immediately sat at my computer and began to create a map to match what I had seen.

I knew the easternmost point was the event from the previous day. I also knew the westernmost point—it was the sight of a terrifying experience in a tent from the spring of 2010. I was camping with a close friend, Natascha, just outside of Dolores, Colorado, and both of us woke up screaming. The next thing I remember was floating up, passing through the top of the tent and arriving in an endless white realm. The next morning I awoke with an eleven-inch scratch across my chest. It looked as if it could have been made by a single rose thorn dragged across my skin. But when examined closely, it wasn't a scratch at all. Instead, it was a row of tiny fluid-filled blisters all bunched together. I have no memory of how this could've happened.

The site along the center of the yellow line was an event from 2011, again with Natascha. We slept in a secluded spot in the glorious red rock desert of southern Utah; no tent, just lying out on the sand. It was a cold, clear moonless night with amazing stars, and Natascha decided to go for a walk along the dirt road. She hadn't gone very far when she saw something odd. Her first thought was there was someone with a very bright flashlight out in the sagebrush, but it was moving along too smoothly and too low. After a few moments, she realized she was looking at a glowing orb of light, maybe two-feet wide. She watched in amazement as it floated towards her, then suddenly exploded in a bright flash, and vanished.

Natascha was scared and ran back to our campsite. I'd been lying there awake the entire time she had been gone and I was listening to the loud hooting of a great horned owl, seemingly in the bushes right near my head.

While sitting at my computer creating this map, I was stunned when these three separate events all lined up exactly along a perfectly straight line, 231

miles long. You could zoom in to view the line at one-pixel thick, and it crossed right over the spot in the sand where I had been listening to the owl. Seeing the exactness of those three sites along that line changed everything. My old life had ended. From that moment on, I could no longer deny what had been happening to me.

There is so much more to this story, and to tell it properly requires about an hour, or over 20 pages (with illustrations) in my book. A flood of other events reverberated outward from this moment of confirmation. Synchronicities, more psychic flashes, number sequences, ethereal floating mandalas, a shamanic ceremony, birthdays, and coyotes, all play a part in this frenetic narrative. It's impossible truly to describe what it's like to be swallowed up like this. It's not just one isolated event; it's a lot of them, and this barrage can take its toll.

That was a long story that seems to imply something, but what that might be is unknown. Each weird experience is like a spoke on a wheel, but I want to know what is at the hub holding them all together. It's an abduction story without an abduction.

Though imperfect, I'll be using the term 'abduction' throughout this essay. I'm also using a few other imperfect terms: abductee, experiencer, and contactee. These words might seem interchangeable, but they all imply something different, each having its own conflicting baggage.

"Abductee" would imply something negative—individuals being taken against their will by UFO occupants. "Contactee" would imply something positive. Such people might see themselves as being asked to take part in a grand cosmic fellowship. "Experiencer," in the middle, is a little more neutral.

There seems to be an induced amnesia created by the UFO intelligences, making the issues of contact terribly difficult to study. Someone might have had a lifetime of repeated experiences, yet remember nothing. These profound events might be buried in the unconscious, yet with impressions that can still influence the person. If so, we should expect some repercussions from these hidden experiences, enough to create personality quirks, like phobias or compulsions.

The word "alien" is used throughout this chapter, and some object to this because it implies a being from another planet (an assumption). Others prefer visitors, ETs, UFO Occupants, or Star Beings. I know one woman who refers

to them only as “creatures.” The dictionary has several definitions for “alien.” One of them is: “differing in nature or character typically to the point of incompatibility.” For me, this seems entirely acceptable. Sadly, all these words fall short because none of this is straightforward.

Abduction accounts can be exceedingly complex. A person might remember just little bits of the beginning and the end of an event, with their memories erased between these bookends. They might recall only a fleeting image, or have clear memories of events in their entirety. I struggle because there’s no simple way to sum up the conflicting experiences that get reported by people.

Some will tell hellish nightmare stories at the hands of their alien kidnappers. Others will tell blissful stories, as if they are communing with angels. I try my best not to weight one side more than the other. Something real is happening. There is both deep trauma and mystical transcendence woven into this phenomenon, and these opposite extremes need to be acknowledged. Ignoring one aspect means willfully denying part of the mystery. There can be an overlap and blurring between these poles; a disparate gray zone where easy answers seem impossible.

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Dr. Leo Sprinkle is one of my heroes in this field. This big-hearted man has been actively researching UFO contact for over 50 years, and his biography reads like a checklist of every major event in the modern era of UFOs. He has a Ph.D. in Counselling and was a Professor of Psychology at the University of Wyoming.

I sent Leo a copy of my owl book right after it was published, and, a few weeks later, he sent me a handwritten letter scolding me for using the word abductee. I love this man dearly, and my heart sank on reading his review. He had been a college professor for decades, and I sensed this role in his stern feedback. He argued that the better word should be ’inductee.’ Induction means being brought to something, while abduction means being taken away. Fair enough, but “abduction” and “abductee” are the words we are stuck with.

Leo told me a wonderful story about a reporter asking him this question: What do you say to skeptics?

First, he clarified the difference between skeptic and a debunker: “Well, if they are truly skeptics that’s one thing, but if they are debunkers I don’t really like to talk to them because they’re no fun (laughs). But if a person is truly skeptical and wants to know how to be involved with the UFO research, I say read a thousand reports, talk to a hundred witnesses, have your own experience and then we can really talk.”

The reporter replied, “Oh, I guess the experience is important.”[19]

Yes, the experience is important, but it’s also messy and confusing. With these experiences come mixed-up emotions and ideas, everything getting filtered through our own fragile psyches, and all the assumptions that come with it. It’s also important to know that Leo has seen strange flying objects at several points in his life and has come forward with his own memories of direct alien contact.

A UFO researcher with abduction experiences is very common. When talking to researchers I will ask if they are an abductee, and, more often than not, they’ll cautiously share their memories of contact. I’m at this point now where I just sort assume that most of the researchers in this field are also abductees. But what does it mean if so many of the people investigating UFOs are abductees? One way to look at it would be that such a defining life event would create an interest in the subject. Or, could they have been zapped with a psychic ray gun that derails their normal life and puts them on the thankless path of obsessive UFO research? On some subconscious level have they been ordered to study UFOs? How many UFO books are the result of this kind of manipulation? I’m wrestling with exactly these questions—I mean, why did I write my book?

If we are trying to reframe the UFO debate, just know that many of the debaters on the stage have probably been abducted. If these experiences are what they seem to be, then it should be no surprise that they can come across like fanatical zealots.

In the summer of 2014, I interviewed the editor and staff of *Open Minds*, an online UFO news source. The audio interview took place shortly after they ended their paper magazine and switched over to digital content. Alejandro Rojas, Maureen Elsberry and Jason McClellan were all full-time UFO journalists, and that seems remarkable given the hostility, which this topic generates.

The site does an excellent job of covering the mainstream accounts of

UFO sightings, and would occasionally cover abduction accounts. The articles on abduction were most often a review of classic cases from decades ago (Betty and Barney Hill, Pascagoula, The Allagash Abductions) or they would cover pioneering researchers such as Budd Hopkins.

I had immersed myself in abduction research and felt the three UFO journalists were barely dipping below the waterline, and avoiding the strangest reports and their implications.

During the interview, I pressed them, telling them they should dig deeper and cover more of the bizarre aspects of this phenomenon, especially in connection with abduction accounts. Their response was a polite but firm, "No." Listening back now, my pleading came across as sort of desperate. It's awkward to hear me acting so pushy, telling a magazine to change their editorial stance. I was almost, but not quite, acting rude.

They were unyielding, not wanting to stray from journalism and into conjecture. Maureen said, "It's almost like mixing religion and news… there's a fine line with this and it would be difficult to do."

Alejandro was aware of the magazine's focus and said, "We try to balance this as best we can… If there's a mission of ours, it's to penetrate the mainstream."[20]

Listening again to that audio interview for this essay, the anxiety and tension in my voice was clear. There was a neediness in how I was acting, and it was hard for me to hear. I was tempted to edit this exchange from the podcast because I sounded like such an impatient zealot. These were my true emotions, so, although it was awkward, I left it in.

Author, blogger and researcher Christopher Knowles wrote to me afterwards: "I listened to your interview with Open Minds. I think you should realize that at this point the only people who are interested in abduction material are mostly abductees. So I think they did have a point there."

Yes, but here's the problem—I feel strongly precisely *because* I'm one of those abductees.

Within the literature are repeated statements that most abductees feel burdened with a strong *sense of mission*. I hear this all the time, but rarely have I heard anyone say just what that mission might be. There is something about this that just feels so terribly important—it's like living your life with a flashing red sign that reads "urgency" front and center in your mind's eye. Adding to this is a burning need to make sense of my experiences, and this

angst can get overwhelming.

After my pleas during that interview, Jason suggested I write something for their site. He was right. What I had asked was for them to publish more of the articles that I would want to read. So I sat down at my computer, began typing and, two months later, they posted my article with the headline "The Possible Unsettling Implications of UFO Sightings."[21]

The ideas in the article came from a series of conversations I'd had with the late Elaine Douglass. She had been with MUFON for 25 years as the state director for Utah and Washington DC, and most of her research had focused on abductions.

While conducting a sightings investigation she would ask the witnesses the standard set of questions—what time, how big, and so on. But she would follow up with deeper, more personal questions, asking them to describe any unusual personal events. She would ask, "So, what else, in your whole life, has ever happened to you that you cannot explain?" More often than not, a big story would emerge. Many of the witnesses told Elaine about unusual events that might imply some sort of direct contact experiences. Her conclusion, after a quarter century of research, was that *over half the people who see UFOs are abductees*.

This may seem like a bold statement, but it's very similar to what other investigators have concluded. Abduction researcher Budd Hopkins spoke openly that if someone sees a UFO, they are most probably either seeing it arrive or leave, and some length of missing time is hiding an abduction event. The implication being that memories have been erased by the "occupants" of these elusive "craft." Hopkins also publicly speculated that there are probably more abductions than UFO sightings, a comment that surely rankled some of the more conservative researchers.

Assuming the role of journalist, I called a bunch of abduction researchers and asked each of them the same question, "What percentage of people who are reporting an unambiguous UFO sighting are actually abductees?" The word unambiguous was included in the question to separate the more close-up structured reports from just little dots of light way off in the distance.

The article quoted five researchers, and, although they all felt it was impossible to come up with an actual percentage, most agreed with Elaine's conclusion. The others were more cautious, yet still acknowledged her point.

When asked the same question, abduction researcher and hypnotherapist

Yvonne Smith was quick to agree with Elaine's conclusion, saying the majority would be abductees. She said, "Many of the close-up sightings will have clues that this was a probable contact experience, things like distorted or missing time, or a car engine sputtering and mysteriously stopping."

Joe Montaldo is both an abduction researcher and an abductee, and he said, "ET never has to show himself to anybody. There is no need to ever let anyone see a craft, ever." This implies that their technology is so advanced that making their craft invisible is effortless, meaning if anyone actually sees a UFO it's because they want to be seen for a reason. When asked to give a percentage of how many people who see a UFO are actually abductees, Joe said, "I'd put it at 100 percent."

Any of these statements would be terribly difficult to quantify, yet one thing all the researchers agreed on was that the closer the UFO to the witness, the more likely an abduction event has occurred. There is an implication that many, if not most UFO sightings have a buried abduction component.

The thought that most sighting reports might be abductions is more than a little bit disturbing. It's at odds with how most of us are even capable of thinking about the issue, and this includes seasoned UFO investigators.

My article generated a lot of traffic for the Open Minds site. There was a stat counter that displayed the online hits, and the numbers were quite high. This gave me the sense that there are plenty of people out there who are eager to read about some of the stranger aspects to the UFO phenomenon. The only other post I could find with higher hits was an article where the actor Dan Aykroyd recounted his personal UFO sighting.

Early on in my research I had a long talk with Miriam Delicado, someone who would fit the definition of a contactee, a term implying an ongoing communication with benevolent aliens. She has been an outspoken presence, sharing her experiences since the publication of her 2007 book, *Blue Star: Fulfilling Prophecy*. During that conversation, I asked her what she tells people when they ask about the reality of these experiences and, without skipping a beat, she said, "Just look at my email inbox."

In the years since that conversation, I've been speaking out about what has happened to me. And now, like Miriam's, my email inbox is overflowing with people reaching out to me. They are telling me their experiences, and most of these letters have a desperate tone. I understand this deep need for someone simply to listen.

This journey has been terribly confusing, especially when I first started looking into my experiences. During those initial years, I sent out letters just like the ones I'm now receiving. I mailed them off to the researchers and experiencers who, I thought, might be able to offer help. What I am receiving, for the most part, is coming from abductees. Even if they don't say it, their stories certainly include clues and events that imply a hidden abduction experience. I read their accounts, try to offer some kind words, answer their questions, and then new ones arrive.

Each one of these stories should be investigated, yet that isn't happening. Just from the number of emails I receive, this phenomenon is much more pervasive than anyone would dare consider. Yet, there isn't the money, manpower or time, truly to deal with the magnitude of what is being reported.

At the heart of each account is a real person, and, in many cases, a family who are struggling with something beyond comprehension. It's one thing to catalog the reports and compare the details, but it's something altogether different to try to come to grips with what it all might mean. Any attempt to reframe the UFO debate requires a deeper awareness that these experiences are terribly complex and deeply personal.

There's a lot of subtle (and not so subtle) clues that imply abductions are something widespread and common. If this is true—and from my point of view it certainly seems to be—shouldn't it be considered important?

UFOs are not ambiguous, they are a part of us, they are interwoven into our human consciousness. But what does this even mean?

The word consciousness has become a sort of catchphrase for anything that might deal with the mind, or perhaps the higher mind. Telepathy, psychic weirdness, collective memories, spiritual awakenings and divine transformations all get lumped into the big consciousness basket. I've heard established UFO researchers being warned by their peers not to go down the path of consciousness. Better to stick with the pragmatic details, like government documents and reports from credible witnesses. The fear is you'll lose all credibility by even considering something so intangible.

Anything seen as new-agey gets ignored by many who want to cling to something tangible, things like metal spaceships. The more ethereal aspects are swept aside for fear of "turning off" the greater public. Better to frame it as something easier to wrap your mind around.

Another reason this weirder stuff gets ignored is some folks feel a need to

be taken seriously. I would love to be taken seriously, too, but I also feel a need to honestly share what's happened to me.

I have spoken to a few abductees who are out there telling their stories in a very public way. They keep to their script, and what they share is both remarkable and strange. But, when I take them aside and ask if anything else is going on, they will whisper something extremely bizarre—I mean like really freaky shit. When I ask why they don't share that part too, they'll say they need to be taken seriously. I get this, yet the dilemma remains. Much of this phenomenon is just too outlandish even to bring to the table.

While at a UFO conference, I spoke briefly with journalist Lee Speigel, who covers (among other things) UFOs for the Huffington Post. I asked him why I never see any articles about abduction in his reporting. He told me that he doesn't want to write anything that would "turn off" the readers. The way he said it was very matter-of-fact and practical.

Moments later I talked with filmmaker James Fox. I asked him if his upcoming feature-length UFO documentary would include anything about abductions. He pretty much gave the same answer, "No, we've decided we want be taken seriously, we don't want to lose our audience."

I've heard this a lot. Journalists, authors or filmmakers who specialize in UFO reporting will shy away from the topic of abductions. Or, if they do cover it, they'll only reference events that are decades old, like Betty and Barney Hill.

The problem with the abduction subject is that it seems to have two layers. The surface layer is what we've all seen on late-night cable TV documentaries—creepy gray aliens taking people from their cars on lonely roads. The deeper layer is much more challenging. Things become absurd; alternative realities get jumbled up with mythic imagery. This is obviously a simplistic way to look at it, and the whole thing probably goes ten layers further down. Hardly anyone wants to address that surface layer, and pretty much nobody wants to go any deeper.

Anne Strieber, the late wife of author Whitley Strieber, had a simple way of evaluating the validity a report of UFO contact. She said, "If it's not weird, I don't trust it." She referred to this little phrase as her BS detector. Author Nick Redfern has said something similar. When trying to describe the complexities of UFO research, he's said, "It's not just that it's weird, it's too weird."

This is what I'm drawn to: the accounts that are so weird they defy any logical explanation. I am pulling on this thread because it's been my own direct experience.

I've been finding that, within some stories, is a confusing collision of overlapping experiences, a mess of twists and turns, and all the details are so weird. Things feel mixed up with threads running off everywhere and synchronicity spills over the edges like an unattended sink. For me, this chaos is a sign to trust the event as legitimate. The more complicated the interwoven details, the more valid it seems. For me, this is a shaky form of proof, but proof of what?

I've been using the term paradox syndrome to describe this frenetic pattern. A paradox is an attempt at sound reasoning, but the conclusion appears unacceptable. A syndrome is a group of related or coinciding things, events, and actions. I don't understand why it works this way, but all the messy threads must tie into some core event, and the challenge is not to get lost in the mayhem. I've been collecting and cataloguing precisely these kinds of stories. My own confirmation event, told earlier, is one of those stories.

If we are trying to reframe the debate, we need to be aware that these more complex accounts are not easy to categorize or share. It takes a great deal of patience to sit and listen to what people have been through. The bar is set pretty high for what I consider too weird, yet I've met plenty of people who tell me stories that stretch what I can fathom. It would be easy to dismiss these folks as unreliable, but I feel strongly that the clues to unravel this mystery are tucked away within their experiences. Here's my advice to any UFO researcher, you need to listen to the abductees, even if what they tell you is challenging.

I spoke to a researcher with a focus on sighting reports and he told me, "I used to do abduction research, but it just took up so much time." My heart sank, yet what he said seems fair—it's easier and less time-consuming to study UFO sightings than to get dragged down into the bottomless pit of abduction research.

I had a friend call me out on how I do my research; he was frustrated and said I wasn't being scientific. My response was 'what do I care, I'm not a scientist.' He was right by pointing out that I'm not objective. I'm not trying to approach this muddle of divergent experiences with science as a tool.

Instead, I see my role as more of a folklorist. I'm simply collecting stories and letting these narratives speak for themselves.

There are cries that the UFO phenomenon should be studied scientifically. Perhaps it should, but that isn't my concern. The scientific community has either ignored or denounced the UFO phenomenon for close to 70 years. With very few exceptions, UFO researchers, who try to wrestle with this mystery using any kind of scientific rigor, end up framing it merely as metal spaceships from another planet. They want to measure burn marks in a farmer's field. They don't want to cloud their tidy documentation with the strange invasion of consciousness that gets reported when you listen carefully to what experiencers are saying. These challenging stories are being lived by real people, and I sense an even deeper story hidden below the water line.

To examine this subject rationally seems tenuous, so I've been putting more of my efforts into trying to read the symbolic clues. I've come to see these experiences playing out with a sort of dream logic. Instead of looking to a pragmatic UFO investigator for answers, it might be better to ask the gypsy fortune teller.

At this point, I see the skills of a dream interpreter being an appropriate tool when analyzing someone's experience. Scrutinizing reality as if it were a dream has become normal for me. This kind of thinking probably puts me on the "outs" with most of the mainstream researchers, but I can't help it. This is an esoteric mystery and it requires esoteric methodologies to peel back its secrets.

If you see a UFO, is it better to call a MUFON investigator, or the local shaman from the nearby Indian Reservation? The no-nonsense investigator will ask what time you saw the object, and to describe what it looked like. The shaman might ask very different questions. What has been going on in your spiritual life leading up to your sighting, and what has changed in the aftermath? He might inquire about dreams, premonitions, gut feelings and intuitions.

This is not a call to dismiss the role of the nuts and bolts investigator. There is a responsibility to walk out into the witness's yard and measure the burn mark in the grass, then write that down in your notebook so it can be compared with other cases. This is an important part of the role of the overall process. But it's equally important to look beyond the physical clues. They'll need to ask the witness how their soul has been influenced by what they've

experienced—and then pay close attention to the answers. We are dealing with a phenomenon that can seep its way into our reality in ways that are both outlandish and profound. My advice to any new researcher would be to expect absurdities and to trust their gut.

Leo Sprinkle spoke with me about his own journey, from UFO researcher to an instantaneous realization that he was himself an UFO experiencer. It happened in a group meeting where he listened to a witness describe the uniform worn by an alien being—the pants had feet connected, like a child's pyjamas. He was hit with a flood of memories and was suddenly sobbing. One of his patients said, "Good, now Leo is suffering like the rest of us!"

Suffering with these experiences is entirely accurate. Leo described the challenges of coming to terms with this realization: "It was a long journey, but finally I accepted that I was on the path, and the way to follow that path is to not only be conscious of what is happening at the head level, but also to be accepting at the heart level or the intuitive level."

This is good advice for self-examination, as well as for looking at the overall contact phenomenon. Many of the people involved have endured something traumatic, and they need help as well as compassion.

Jeffrey Kripal is a historian of religions, and a professor of Philosophy and Religious Thought at Rice University in Houston, Texas. He is the author of multiple books on the mystical experience, including *The Super Natural*, which he co-authored with Whitley Strieber.

Jeff has studied ancient manuscripts and also worked with people who tell of their own anomalous experiences. These might be religious epiphanies, or a UFO contact event. In the quote below, Jeff describes what I've encountered many times. He articulates clearly the challenges of listening to people as they share what has happened to them and the task of making sense of these stories.

> This is the thing about this material, you think you've heard the last strange thing, and then it gets stranger. What the debunker [rationalist] thinks is that, no—if we just had enough information it would all make sense and all the strangeness would go away.
>
> But my experience with these folks is exactly the opposite. The more they tell you the weirder it gets. Part of the reason is that they don't quite trust you in the beginning, so they tell you just sort of the surface of the story. And then they tell you a little more, and a little more. And the more they tell you the stranger it gets. It does not make more sense; it makes less sense. And I think that this is important. I think that is part of the phenomenon, that it's absurd, and that it's meant to confuse us. And I think that, when we look for it to make

> sense, I think we are going down the wrong path. Because it doesn't.[22]

I understand this in my bones, because I have lived it. Seeing a UFO on a clear starry night is just the smallest part of my story. There is so much more. Coming to terms with what I have been through has required abandonment. I was desperate for a pragmatic answer, but any hope of that stayed beyond my reach; it just floated away and then disappeared. I had to give up and, in doing so, I've reached a place of calmer waters. I've had to leave the comfort of that brightly lit lamp-post, step off the pavement, climb into the thorny bushes, and be content in the darkness. In many ways, this describes the owl, a creature at home in the dark.

After the publication of *Communion* in 1987, Whitley Strieber received a flood of letters, this in an era where people wrote on paper and mailed them in envelopes. His wife, Anne, spent the next few years reading upwards of a quarter of a million of these letters. What she read were heartfelt accounts sent by people describing their own contact experiences at the hands of alien visitors:

> Mr. Strieber, I'm scared. After this happened, I felt like I had been standing on bedrock, and that it had dropped out from under my feet, leaving me floating in an ocean whose bottom I could not see. I felt as if everything I thought I'd been clear about for seventeen years—the things that people learn—were lies, and that this was what was important. But it scared me, and I wasn't sure that I wasn't crazy. I in fact tried to commit suicide because I didn't want to be a lunatic.[23]

This kind of personal testimony is common; I've heard it often. These experiences can be horribly traumatic. Even the good experiences will leave people adrift without any easy way to deal with the sudden disappearance of their sense of reality. Your old way of thinking crumbles, and then something new needs to be rebuilt to take its place.

For me, this has already happened. I have suffered through the realization that I am, for lack of a better word, an 'abductee.' These trying events would make normal life for anyone nearly impossible. This new awareness is sometimes referred to as the *trauma of enlightenment*.

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A collective myth has blossomed within the UFO community: “Disclosure with a capital D.” Many of the true believers foresee a press conference where the President of the United States will declare that UFOs are real, but I’m not holding my breath.[6]

I don’t need someone in authority to tell me what I already know, and I certainly won’t wait for some kind of approval. Fuck all that.

Trying to frame it all as something simple isn’t working. We want a nice British actor with a deep voice stepping from his shiny flying saucer like that scene in *The Day The Earth Stood Still*. I’ve spoken to hundreds of abductees, and never once have I heard anyone describe seeing an alien walk out of a landed craft (that said, I’ve read some accounts like that, but very few). Instead, a lot of people have told me of little beings just stepping into their bedroom through a swirling vortex in the wall. But this is rarely mentioned out under that lamp-post.

I am no longer in a position to wait for others to make ripples in this pond. It’s my job to say what I feel in my heart in a way that will be heard. This is an arena that most people will ignore, or dismiss with contempt. Simply talking about these ideas is considered crazy in the eyes of many.

But there is a need to be brave. Mythologist Joseph Campbell wrote about the challenge of the inner quest, “You enter the forest at the darkest point, where there is no path.” He was referencing the Knights of the Round Table, as they embarked upon their quest for the Grail. The UFO subject is just a long list of unknowns with no path to follow, yet you can still press on in that darkness.

Everyone is fragile and we all bring our own baggage to the table. Trying to grapple with these ideas seems to reflect some deeper part of ourselves back at us. The reporter who spoke with Leo Sprinkle was right when he said *the experience is important*—it has the power to change you.

I really have no idea what is happening and what it all might mean; my thoughts change with the wind. What I feel strongly on Monday fades away on Tuesday, replaced by some new perspective on Wednesday. Ideas form, shape up into something viable, and then collapse. We are confronted by a mystery, and nothing would be more gratifying than to actually solve it. But I don’t expect that to ever happen.

This is a deeply personal journey, and it feels like a mistake to depend on others for approval. There are times when I feel like I’m chasing my tail,

stalling out, or just plain overwhelmed. Yet I wallow forward, trying to make sense of the madness. There is something about this stuff that just *feels important*, I don't know how else to say it.

It's not my job to remedy problems in the UFO community, but it's my responsibility to proceed onward doing the best I can. This is hard work, and the hardest of all is looking inward.

About the author

the author and his little buddy

Mike Clelland's 2015 book, *The Messengers*, was met with high praise. In it he explores the mysterious connection between owls, synchronicities and UFO abduction. It was his firsthand experiences with these elusive events that have been the foundation for his research. This book is also a personal memoir, and a journey of self discovery.

His website hiddenexperience.blogspot.com explores these events, and their connection to the alien contact phenomenon. It also features extended audio interviews with visionaries and experts examining the complexities of the overall UFO experience.

Mike is also considered an expert in the skills of ultralight backpacking, and is the author and illustrator of a series of instructional books on advanced outdoor techniques. After 25 years living in the Rockies, he now lives in the Adirondacks.

Other books by Mike Clelland

The Messengers

A classic by one of the most exciting new authors in the UFO field. This is a collection of first-hand accounts in which owls manifest in the highly charged moments that surround alien contact. There is a strangeness to these stories that defy simple explanations. This is also a deeply personal story, and an odyssey of self-discovery as the author grapples with his own owl and UFO encounters. (link)

Stories from the Messengers

A companion to the groundbreaking ideas that began with *The Messengers*, and a further exploration into the connection, both symbolic and literal, between owls and UFOs. Each chapter tells a deeply personal story where these mysterious experiences are explored in depth. The ancient mythology of the owl is repeating itself within the modern UFO report. What plays out is a journey of transformation, with an owl at the heart of each story. (link)

Ultralight Backpackin' Tips

A backpacking instructional with cartoons! This humorous book carefully explains advanced techniques to reduce your pack weight, without sacrificing safety or comfort. This is the ultimate guide for traveling ultralight in the wilderness. (link)

Hidden Experience Podcast

Archived interviews

Between 2009 and 2014 I hosted over 90 podcasts, totaling over 200 hours of audio interviews. I am proud of this work, and the depth of the ideas that were explored in those shows. This all came about for sort of selfish reasons. There were people I desperately wanted to talk with but it would have been awkward to call them out of the blue, so I started the podcast as a way to connect with them. I was shameless about telling researchers about my experiences and asking for their insights—I knew I was doing this, and I said it clearly plenty of times. But the most powerful shows were the ones I did with fellow experiencers, I felt so connected during these conversations.

These are all archived on my site (linked here), as well as on iTunes and Stitcher.

Here's a list of guests, alphabetical by their first names:

Adam Gorightly, Alan Abbadessa Green, Alan Caviness, Andy Colvin, Anya Briggs, Barbara Lamb, Bert Janssen and Heather Clewett-Jachowski, Brad Steiger, Bret Oldham, Bridget Nielsen, Budd Hopkins from 2007, Charis Melina Brown, Chase Kloetzke, Chica Bruce, Christopher Knowles, Christopher O'Brien, Chuck Weiss, Colin Andrews, Cynthia Crawford, Darryl Anka, David Weatherly, Diana the animal spirit communicator, Elaine Douglass, Fred Burks, Freeman Fly, Gibbs Williams, Grant Cameron, Greg Bishop, Jake Kotze, Dr. Janet Elizabeth Colli, James Carmen, Jason Horsley, Jeff Kripal, Jim Marrs, Jim Moroney, Joe Montaldo, Jonathan Talat Phillips, Kathleen Marden, Kim Carlsberg, Kewaunee Lapseritis, Dr. Leo Sprinkle, Lorin Cutts, Lucretia Heart, Marisa Ryan, Marla Frees, Mary Rodwell, Mel Fabregas, Melinda Leslie, Micah Hanks, Miriam Delicado, Nadine Lalich, Nick Redfern, Open Minds journalists Alejandro Rojas, Maureen Elsberry and Jason McClellan, Peter Robbins, Phil Imbrogno, Preston Dennett, Regan Lee, Richard Dolan, Robert Stanley, Rosemary Ellen Guiley, Sesh Heri, Sherry Wilde, Susan MacLeod, Suzanne Chancellor, Suzanne Gordon Ph.D., Trish and Rob MacGregor, Walter Bosley, Whitley Strieber, William Henry,

and Yvonne Smith.

Final notes

This book was self-published by Mike Clelland.

This book is also available as a paperback book, as well as an audiobook.

The editor was Suzanne Chancellor, her website is linked here.

I am actively collecting owl stories. If anyone out there has had any unusual experiences with owls, I would be honored to hear them. You can contact me at my website, linked here.

If you've made it this far,
thank you so much. Bye now.

[1] Fowler, Raymond, *The Watchers*, Bantam (1990)

[2] *The Messengers*, p. 29

[3] *The Messengers*, p. 29

[4] Kannenberg, Ida, *UFOs and the Psychic Factor*. Wild Flower Press (1992).

[5] Kurt Vonnegut, *Slaughterhouse-Five or, The Children's Crusade*, (Delacorte Press, 1969), p. 95

[6] Strieber, Whitley. *Transformation: Book II of the Communion Series*. Crossroad Press. Chapter 20, Kindle location 2965.

[7] *Transformation: Book II of the Communion Series*. Chapter 20, Kindle location 2979.

[8] Strieber, Anne. *The Communion Letters*. Crossroad Press. Afterword, Kindle location 3529.

[9] *The Communion Letters*. Chapter 6, Kindle location 2359.

[10] *The Communion Letters*. Chapter 6, Kindle location 2450.

[11] Strieber, Whitley; Kripal, Jeffrey J. (2016). *The Super Natural.* Penguin Publishing Group. (p. 313)

[12] Long, Gregory, *'Kenneth Arnold: UFO Pioneer'*, MUFON Journal, (ed. Richard Hall) #165, Nov. 1981. "As Arnold spoke, he revealed an unyielding, critical attitude toward science that ignores, ridicules, or attempts to rationalize away the "damned," Fort's term for anomalous data that do not fit established scientific views. This attitude is readily understandable given the treatment he has received at the hands of the press and the skeptics."

[13] *The Super Natural* (p. 93) full quote from Jeff Kripal: "Although this is pure speculation on my part, I cannot help but wonder if behind (or above) all this super-writing floated some personal sighting in those haunted Hudson Valley skies, or even some private "abduction" experience. Charles Fort certainly would not have been the first to see things in that sky or experience such an encounter in that haunted valley. Nor would he, of course, be the last.

[14] *The Super Natural* (p. 213)

[15] *The Super Natural* (p. 228)

[16] The Messengers, p. 282

[17] Smallwood, Tucker, *Return To Eden*, Lulu.com, 2006

[18] Graham, Robbie, *UFOs: Reframing the Debate,* White Crow Books, (May 27, 2017)

[19] Audio interview with Dr. Leo Sprinkle, *Hidden Experience podcast*, Jan. 5, 2011, http://hiddenexperience.blogspot.com/2011/01/audio-conversation-with-dr-leo-sprinkle.html

[20] Audio conversation with the crew from Open Minds, *Hidden Experience podcast*, Jun. 4, 2014, http://hiddenexperience.blogspot.com/2014/06/audio-conversation-with-crew-from-open.html (linked here)

[21] Mike Clelland, "*The Possible Unsettling Implications of UFO Sightings*," Jul. 30, 2014, http://www.openminds.tv/possible-unsettling-implications-ufo-sightings/29256 (linked here)

[22] Audio interview, *Where Did the Road Go*, Jeffery Kripal, May 28, 2016, time count 42:30, http://www.wheredidtheroadgo.com/show-archive/2016/item/290-jeffrey-kripal-on-the-super-natural-part-1-may-21-2016 (linked here)

[23] Whitley Strieber and Anne Strieber, *The Communion Letters* (Harper Collins, 1997)